

Jordan Times

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Mubarak in Gulf to discuss Iranian 'threats'

MUSCAT (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Sunday began talks in Oman at the start of a Gulf tour expected to focus on the alleged threat from Iran to Arab states. Mr. Mubarak met in Muscat with Sultan Qaboos, the Omani News Agency reported without disclosing details of the talks. Mr. Mubarak will later visit Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. "The real threat in the region is Iran," Egyptian Foreign Ministry spokesman Naghi Al Ghaithi told AFP, adding that the Arab states must map out a common strategy to confront events both regionally and internationally. He said the tour was to find ways to thwart Iran's "ambition to dominate" the Middle East. Egypt has repeatedly accused Iran of playing a destabilising role in the region by supporting Muslim militants who are trying to overthrow the government in Cairo and install an Islamic state. Officials in Cairo have often voiced concern over the lack of a countermeasure to Iran's military might in the region since the destruction of the Iraqi army during the Gulf war. "Iraq is the only country capable of facing up to Iran in the Gulf war," Mr. Mubarak recently said in an interview with the French newspaper Le Figaro.

Algiers blast suspect retracts concession

ALGIERS (AFP) — The alleged ringleader in the trial of 55 people accused of involvement in a bomb attack blamed on Islamic fundamentalists which left nine dead retracted Sunday a televised confession he made last October. On the third day of the trial here, Hocine Abderrahim, a former senior aide of Abassi Madani, president of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), declared himself "innocent" of involvement in the attack. He said he had been put under "pressure" to confess by detectives investigating the blast, which killed nine and injured 123 at Algiers international airport last August. The retraction came amid news Sunday of the separate arrest of 39 armed Islamic fundamentalists charged with attempted murder, and the violent deaths of two policemen and three fundamentalists. Mr. Abderrahim said on television at the time of his arrest that he was the ringleader of the attack and had received backing from leaders of Islamic underground movements. On Saturday one of Mr. Abderrahim's co-accused, Said Soussene, also went back on earlier confessions, claiming these had been extracted under "threats and torture."

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Israeli army disarms 'vigilante' settlers

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli army said Monday it had confiscated weapons from settlers who were planning a vigilante "police force" in the occupied territories. Jewish settlers decided to create their own police to counter an armed Palestinian police force which would be set up under an autonomous regime in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. After Israel Television showed Jewish settlers linked to the anti-Arab Kach movement undergoing arms training in the occupied territories, the army said it moved in. A military spokesman said several settlers had their guns confiscated because they had permits for self-defence and not for paramilitary training.

Zionists 'marry' Golan Heights

QIRYAT SHEMONA (AFP) — Several thousand religious Zionists "married" the Golan Heights and pledged to defend Israeli "sovereignty" over the plateau Sunday, a traditional Jewish wedding day. The protesters, fearing the government will cede the strategic heights in exchange for peace with Syria, signed a marriage contract. "We will not accept any unfortunate government decisions liable to lead, out of weakness, to withdrawal (from the Golan) and the uprooting of settlements," the contract read.

Iraqi hanged for killing Kuwaiti

KUWAIT (AP) — Kuwait has hanged an Iraqi for killing a border guard, the first execution since the emirate was liberated from Iraqi occupation in 1991, an Interior Ministry spokesman said Sunday. Abdul Hassan Khafri, 30, was hanged at the central jail on Tuesday, according to the spokesman. Adel Ibrahim, an Interior Ministry spokesman said Sunday, Abdul Hassan Khafri, 30, was hanged at the central jail on Tuesday, according to the spokesman. Adel Ibrahim, an Interior Ministry spokesman said Sunday, Abdul Hassan Khafri, 30, was hanged at the central jail on Tuesday, according to the spokesman.

Israel military plant blast kills 1

TEL AVIV (R) — An explosion at a factory of Israel Military Industries (IMI) in central Israel killed one man Sunday, army radio said. "One man was killed in an explosion at the military industries factory in Ramat Hasharon," the radio said. There were no reports of other injuries in the 3:30 p.m. (1230 GMT) blast, it said. Two accidental blasts at an IMI facility in central Israel in July 1992 spurred calls to speed transfer of munitions plants from the densely populated Tel Aviv region to the desert.

Sick expellee secretly evacuated

MARJ AL ZOHOOR, Lebanon (AFP) — A seriously ill Palestinian expellee was sneaked out past Lebanese army lines on a mule-back Sunday to hospital, a doctor among the 396 exiles said. Lebanon and Israel, which expelled the men in December, are refusing to take responsibility for the exiles. Ali Mahmud Abu Al Kees, 60, was suffering from stomach disorders, according to the doctor who diagnosed him at the barren camp in Marj Al Zohour. He was put on a mule's back and taken to a hospital in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley, added the doctor who declined to be named.

Core issues loom into focus on Jordanian-Israeli track

From Nermeen Murad in Washington

JORDANIAN-ISRAELI negotiations are expected to shift into a different gear during this last week of Middle East peace talks, marking new phase in which technical teams from both sides begin to tackle the core issues on this track.

Until today, negotiations have concentrated on defining the issues — on the agenda for talks — and the mechanism for conducting talks over the different items in the agenda — i.e. technical committees. But while the final format of the agenda is not complete,

enough progress on defining a political framework had been made by the end of last week to allow for moving towards substantive engagement in negotiations.

To better equip themselves for this next stage of negotiations, Jordanians say, changes will be made on the makeup of the delegation to allow for the inclusion of technical experts on the team and to minimise the number of political appointments.

Most of those interviewed said they expected changes in the delegation to meet the demands of the more detail-oriented phase of negotiations. First signs, Jordanian nego-

tiators say, indicate that the next phase of negotiations with Israel "is not going to be easy" because it is becoming clear that while the issues are defined, the priorities allocated, by Israelis, to one over the other are different.

Sources tell the Jordan Times that while Jordan is clear about giving priority to water rights, land rights and the issue of Palestinian refugees living in Jordan, "Israel keeps trying to take us back to future cooperation and in way or another normalisation."

Jordan insists on discussing all items on the agenda and on

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Palestinians working on own draft

TUNIS (Agencies) — The Palestinians Sunday criticised Israel's offer for limited self-rule in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, but stopped short of totally rejecting the proposal made during last week's peace talks in Washington.

Faisal Hussein, the Palestinians' chief negotiator, said that after three days of detailed study of the Israeli plan, the Palestinian leadership concluded that it contained "some good points, but not enough for us to accept it as it is."

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Full text of Israeli proposal

Last Thursday, the Israeli delegation presented their Palestinian counterparts to the Washington Middle East peace talks with a draft "framework agreement" for the negotiations. Hanan Ashrawi, the Palestinian spokesperson, Saturday said the Palestinian negotiators received the Israeli proposals with "extreme displeasure" but were not rejecting it out of hand. The Palestinian leadership in Tunis, however, initially rejected the proposal but were later reported to be working on their own proposal. Following is the full text of the Israeli proposal, a copy of which was obtained by the Jordan Times:

Informal draft for consideration

Agreed statement of principles

Israel and the Palestinians agree to base their negotiations on the following principles:

1. The goal of negotiations and terms of reference:

of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, based on resolutions 242 and 338, per the Madrid invitation, to be conducted in two phases:

- (1) Talks conducted with the objective of reaching agreement on interim self-government arrangements,
- (2) Beginning the third year.

negotiations on the permanent status will take place. These negotiations will be conducted on the basis of resolutions 242 and 338.

The process is one. Its two phases are interlocked in the agreed timeframe; the first phase will also naturally bear relevance towards the second phase, with the understanding that all options for the second phase remain open to the parties to agree in the framework of the above mentioned agreed basis.

The terms of reference of this process are the Madrid invitation.

2. General

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Prince Hassan calls for comprehensive approach to Gulf war compensation

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said Sunday that compensation for the expatriates who returned from the Gulf as a result of the war over Kuwait should be handled in a comprehensive manner and should take into consideration the national and pan-Arab dimensions.

All concerned parties should be involved in handling this issue and this means positive and flexible dealing with the institutions in

the Gulf countries, especially the social and cultural organisations which have expressed understanding of Jordan's position and desire to resume dialogue and contacts with the Kingdom. Prince Hassan said at a meeting held at the headquarters of the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO).

"Such contacts with the Gulf will help Arab states overcome the consequences of previous painful events and serve the his-

er national interests by removing the clouds marring inter-Arab relations and help rebuild bridges of understanding and credibility and cooperation among the people and organisations of the Arab World," Prince Hassan said.

Noting that Jordan has received thousands of returnees from the Gulf — accounting to nearly one tenth of the total population of the country —

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S. Arabia angry over human rights committee

NICOSIA (AFP) — Saudi Arabia has voiced its anger over the creation by Saudi scholars of a human rights group to fight what they said was oppression and injustice, a London-based association said Sunday.

Liberty, an independent group which specialises in the defence and promotion of human rights and democratic reforms in Muslim countries, said the leaders of the Saudi group were summoned Saturday by the Riyadh govern-

Sales tax move said frozen

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government has frozen all moves towards introducing a controversial sales tax and is trying to secure interim clearance to go ahead with debt rescheduling negotiations coming up next month without having to impose the levy, informed sources said Sunday.

The introduction of the tax is part of Jordan's economic restructuring programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and an IMF certification that the government is implementing the programme is a precondition for the debt rescheduling talks.

But opposition from within the Council of Ministers as well as considerations of the socio-economic impact of the sales tax have been holding up the enactment of a temporary law intro-

ducing the levy.

The assumption last week was that the tax would not be introduced at all by the present government of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker which was expected to step down in early May and that a successor cabinet, whether headed by Sharif Zeid or not, would enact the draft temporary law endorsed by a Royal decree. But His Majesty King Hussein asked Sharif Zeid to stay on for a few more weeks with the same team of ministers.

"Considering everything, the economic team of the cabinet feels that the introduction of the sales tax should wait some more," said a senior official. "In the meantime, search is under way for a mechanism to secure the required IMF certification so that the government can negotiate debt rescheduling."

Economists noted that Jordan cannot afford to postpone the

debt rescheduling talks beyond June 30 since a delay would mean a higher volume of due payments — capital and interest — which would pose greater problems for the Kingdom.

Jordan, which has already rescheduled debt repayments due until June 1993 to the Paris Club of the creditor governments, is seeking a similar deal over its obligations until December 1994. Negotiations with the London Club, with which Jordan has not finalised any agreement since 1989, are also due next month.

The IMF, which tends to project Jordan as a model case of Third World countries under debt burdens improving their economies with IMF-prescribed programmes, is known to be sympathetic to the Kingdom's case. But it remains to be seen how it would handle an approach from

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Reshuffle likely to end Rabin crisis

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was expected to reshuffle his cabinet to save his fragile government and keep up Mideast peace talks after a religious party minister submitted his resignation Sunday.

Interior Minister Aryeh Deri of the Shas party handed in a resignation letter after Mr. Rabin failed to meet demands to move the liberal education minister to another post, Israeli radio said.

Education Minister Shulamit Aloni, backed by her leftist Meretz Party, has refused to step down.

There were still signs of compromise. By Israeli law, Mr. Deri's resignation takes effect only in 48 hours, leaving plenty of time for negotiations. Israeli media

and officials also indicated that an exchange of cabinet jobs was being worked out.

"This crisis has a solution. It's like a suspense movie: We know the beginning, we know the ending, we just don't know the middle parts," said Police Minister Moshe Shahal.

While both Shas and Meretz support the peace talks, squabbling could force Mr. Rabin to rely on five Arab deputies to maintain his majority. Deprived of his "Jewish majority," Mr. Rabin would be hard pressed to make "territorial compromises" with the Arabs, analysts say.

Mr. Rabin has said the political arm-twisting could cause the fall of the government and end the peace talks.

Shas holds six of the 62 seats supporting Mr. Rabin's coalition in the 120-member parliament. That means the party's departure would reduce his support to a minority of 56 lawmakers, and the government could only survive with outside support from five Arab legislators.

Opposition parties, led by the right-wing Likud, have already threatened to test the cabinet's strength and try to bring down the government in a vote of confidence Monday.

Expecting the resignation, Mr. Rabin was manoeuvring even before. He met leaders of Mrs. Aloni's 12-member Meretz parliamentary faction, proposing a

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PLO hits back at Brotherhood

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Palestinian embassy in Amman has urged the Muslim Brotherhood bloc in Parliament, to "respect their position" as members of the legislative authority and refrain from interfering in internal Palestinian affairs.

"Do not forget that you are deputies in the Jordanian Parliament... Respect the norms of communications," the embassy told the Brotherhood bloc in a letter sent to its spokesman late Saturday.

The embassy sent the letter after the bloc launched its strongest attack yet on the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), accusing it of treason and rejecting the legitimacy of its representation of the Palestinian people.

Tension between the Brotherhood and the PLO escalated after PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat earlier this month accused the Brotherhood deputies of interfering in Palestinian affairs when they sent him a letter urging withdrawal from the Arab-Israeli peace process.

On Saturday, the Brotherhood bloc tried to send Mr. Arafat a letter in which they accused him of making concessions detrimental to the interests of the Palestinian people and breaking the PLO promise not to return to the peace talks before Israel repatriates Palestinians Israel expelled to South Lebanon in December last year.

The Palestinian embassy refused to receive the letter.

"If you have any questions (about the peace process), direct them to your government which is attending the peace talks in a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation," the embassy said in the letter which a Brotherhood member said the bloc had received.

"The letter which you sent to Mr. Arafat should have been addressed to the Jordanian delegation (to the peace talks)," said the letter.

Lower House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat said the House had nothing to do with the developments between the PLO and the Brotherhood bloc, but he

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Assad: Israel showing signs of seriousness

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Israeli negotiators are starting to show they are serious about making peace with the Arabs, Syrian President Hafez Al Assad said in remarks obtained Sunday.

"Israeli delegations took no steps forward" during the eight previous rounds of Middle East peace talks, Mr. Assad said in an interview to appear in Monday's edition of the Al Wasat weekly.

"But we have the impression that the Israeli negotiators are starting to become serious" since the start of the ninth round on April 27 in Washington, Mr. Assad said.

The ninth session is to end this week. "The favourable trend towards peace had gained strength within Israel in the last two years and that can only have an influence on the leaders" of the Jewish state, Mr. Assad said in a copy of the interview obtained by news agencies.

But Israeli negotiators must still do more to reassure the Arabs about their intentions.

"We really want peace, but our

doubts persist as to whether Israel wants peace," the Syrian president was quoted as saying.

"When Syria (last year) proposed total peace in exchange for a complete withdrawal (from the Arab territories occupied by Israel), it was an enormous step forward aimed at putting the ball in the Israeli court," he said.

But "they did not accept our proposal," he added.

Mr. Assad also said one of the four Arab parties in the peace negotiations might reach a bilateral accord with Israel before the others and still not violate an Arab stand against separate peace deals.

"We are involved in this process together, and consequently, even if one of the parties reaches a bilateral accord, it will not be a separate peace," he said.

Syria has demanded a full Israeli withdrawal from the strategic Golan Heights in exchange for peace.

"The ball is in their (Israel's) court now but they have not given

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Iraq ridicules charges it plotted to kill Bush

AMMAN (Agencies) — Iraq has ridiculed U.S. and Kuwaiti charges it was involved in a plot to kill former U.S. President George Bush during a visit to Kuwait last month, saying the two countries were laying the groundwork for further aggression.

The sheikhs of Kuwait in coordination with American intelligence are plotting another deception to fool American public opinion in order to justify a new aggression on Iraq and tighten the economic siege imposed on it," Iraqi Information Minister Hamed Yousef Al Hummadi said in a statement.

Kuwaiti authorities said they uncovered an alleged plan to assassinate Mr. Bush during his triumphal April 14-16 visit to the emirate, which was liberated from Iraqi occupation by U.S.-led military coalition in February 1991.

A senior U.S. official said in

Washington Saturday that the United States had "credible intelligence" Baghdad was involved in the death plot and was weighing possible retaliation.

Mr. Hummadi, in a statement issued by the Iraqi embassy in Amman last Saturday, said the fact that among those making the accusations was Kuwaiti Information Minister Sheikh Saud Nasser Al Sabah made it clear the story was fabricated.

"Sheikh Saud Al Sabah is a liar because it is known that his daughter Nira was used by the American intelligence to mislead Congress and American public opinion by concocting the known incubator story before the military aggression on Iraq," the statement said.

Mr. Hummadi was referring to testimony by Sheikh Saud's daughter to the U.S. Congress, while he was Kuwait's ambassador.

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Democracy in Jordan — a 'beacon of hope' in Mideast

By Ed Blanche
The Associated Press

AMMAN — Political change in the volatile Arab World has invariably come through coups and assassinations. But in Jordan, King Hussein is introducing democratic reforms he believes will herald peaceful transitions.

He considers the programme he initiated in 1989 as the "greatest achievement" of his 40-year reign and believes it will become a "beacon of hope" for a region where absolute monarchies and one-party rule are the norm.

Not everyone in Jordan is convinced the reforms, among

the most far-reaching in the Arab World, will go far enough to immunise the Kingdom and maintain its hard-won stability.

King Hussein recently declared unequivocally that "anyone who dares to threaten democracy... or exploit freedom with the aim of subverting it, will be stopped."

He underlined that last fall when two prominent Islamist legislators were sentenced to 20 years in prison for plotting against the monarchy.

He pardoned them, but the message was loud and clear: The King gives and he can take away.

Some believe the trial was a

signal that reforms will have their limits and will remain vulnerable to interference from the top.

Few entrenched Arab regimes are showing any inclination to follow King Hussein's lead as they tackle collapsing economies and Islamic fundamentalists, who are waging terrorist campaigns in Egypt and Algeria.

Violent fundamentalism is likely to swell because of the region's grinding poverty, mushrooming populations and dwindling resources.

Veteran Middle East analyst Charles Snow noted that King Hussein's experiment "cannot but look bold in a regional

context, in which the appointment of powerless consultative councils passes for liberalisation.

... Jordan is now virtually the only Arab country which is testing the idea that political pluralism, even if limited, can withstand the rising tide of Islamic absolutism," he wrote in the Middle East Economic Survey.

Most Arab states are either absolute monarchies or one-party rule autocracies. However, Kuwait has an elected legislature and Yemen last month held its first parliamentary ballot since North and South merged in 1990. Israel also has a full parliamentary

system.

King Hussein's reform programme was triggered by riots in April 1989 against harsh austerity measures and official corruption.

The unrest centred in bedouin regions, traditionally the bedrock of support for the monarchy, and it jolted the regime badly.

King Hussein first allowed parliamentary elections in November 1989, the first full ballot in 22 years. He then legalised political parties for the first time in 40 years, lifted martial law and produced a 1990 National Charter that guaran-

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The Italian Embassy in Jordan
and
the Italian Institute for External Commerce
invite all Jordanian specialised companies to attend the
"Technological Symposium on Medical Equipment"
which will be held on May 15th and 16th, 1993
at the Inter-Continental Hotel, Amman
starting 10:00 a.m.

The Italian companies coming from Italy will present themselves and their products.

For further information, please call the Second Secretary of the Italian Embassy in Amman, Dr. Raffaele de Benedictis (Ph. 638185, Fax 659730, P.O.Box 9800) or Dr. Hani H. Shaheen (MBF Representative, Ph. and Fax 683028, P.O.Box 926775, Amman)

Algeria to alter party laws and hold referendum

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria will hold a constitutional referendum later this year as part of plans to set up a democracy, Head of State Ali Kafi announced in a televised broadcast Saturday night.

He also indicated that laws which took a radical Islamic Party to the brink of power would be changed.

Algeria's 26 million people now live under a state of emergency, without a parliament and with Algiers and other main regions under a night curfew.

More than 600 people have died in ambushes and clashes between security forces and Muslim militants since January 1992 when the Front Islamique Salvateur (FIS) took an overwhelming lead in elections which were later annulled.

Mr. Kafi said the transition period for creating democracy would be kept as short as possible and the country would move in "an organised way towards a (free) market economy."

More talks would be held with political parties and groups before the referendum, he said, although those "who practise or support terrorism" would be excluded.

He did not say what questions would be asked in the vote, but he urged "political and social forces" to mobilise to create the conditions for a "program for the return to the electoral process."

"The laws organising the pluralist political system we envisage putting in place will be corrected in the light of experience," he added.

Under the present law, just 15 Algerian adults can form a political party. But parties, theoretically, cannot be based on religion, language or region.

The FIS, which sought to turn Algeria into a fundamentalist Islamic state, was banned last year. Opponents of the Islamists say two more moderate existing parties are also based on religion,

while others are seen as essentially regional.

Algeria's progress towards democracy was halted in January 1992 after the FIS emerged as massive first-round winners of the country's first multi-party parliamentary elections.

The elections were abandoned and President Chadli Benjedid, who had ended nearly three decades of one-party centralised rule after riots in October 1988, resigned.

The mandate of the collective presidency, which took over from Mr. Benjedid and is headed by Mr. Kafi, is due to expire on Dec. 31 this year.

Mr. Kafi gave no hint of how long the transition period to democracy would last, but he said that "real democracy can only operate on the basis of durable economic development."

Officials have said that poverty provides a breeding ground for Islamic militants and Prime Minister Belaid Abdul Salam has said that it will take three to five years to turn around the debt-battered economy.

Mr. Kafi said that, during the transition, the unelected national consultative council would be enlarged and its "privileges reinforced."

The council, set up to help fill the vacuum created with the dissolution of parliament after Mr. Benjedid quit, currently has only an advisory role.

Mr. Kafi, blaming violence on "groups of darkness," said their attempt to destabilise the state was "destined for failure and would be broken." The country would "pursue its march towards greater development, liberty and democracy."

He said Algeria's security forces were combating "the terrorist acts... more and more efficiently."

Hours before he spoke, police reported killing three "terrorists," as fundamentalists are known, only 50 kilometres from Algiers.

Socialists may lose Yemeni premiership

SANAA (R) — Former Marxists of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) might not be able to retain the prime minister's post in Yemen which they have held since North and South merged three years ago, an opposition newspaper said Sunday.

The English-language Yemen Times said President Ali Abdullah Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC), which emerged as the largest party in parliament in an April 27 election, wanted the post for itself.

The GPC "wants to keep the two top posts, the presidency and the premiership," it said in a report on talks for a broad-based coalition that would include the two parties and opposition Islamists.

The GPC which formerly ruled the North and the YSP which controlled the South, have shared power since the merger.

The GPC won two-fifths of the new 301-seat parliament in last month's general elections, the first since the May 1990 merger.

The YSP won about a quarter — capturing virtually all seats in southern Yemen but failing to make any significant inroads in the more populous north that would have enabled it to continue its 50-50 partnership with the GPC.

The YSP was still discussing the likelihood of a YSP prime minister emerging from the protracted coalition bargaining that started shortly after the elections.

One YSP source said the speaker of the outgoing parliament, Yaseen Said No'man of the YSP, had set certain conditions for accepting the premiership. He might compromise if some of his terms were met but he did not say what they were.

Other media reports tipped for Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Hatheem, a former prime minister in the south who defected to the GPC.

YSP sources said outgoing Prime Minister Haider Abu Bakr Al Attas was virtually certain to be elected speaker when the new parliament holds its first meeting Saturday.

Official sources said parliament was also expected to approve President Saleh's proposal to abolish the five-member presidential council which has been in place since the merger.

The posts of president and vice-president would, however, be retained by incumbents Saleh and Ali Salem Al Baidh of the YSP.

Yemen Times said a 19-member cabinet was expected to emerge from the coalition talks.

Six cabinet portfolios, including the foreign ministry, would go to the YSP, three to independents and two to the Yemeni Gathering for Reform (YGR), a pro-Saudi Islamist party that won just over a fifth of seats and was expected to get the posts of religious affairs and information.

Salem Saleh Mohammad, the YSP's deputy secretary-general, is widely expected to become foreign minister.

YGR leader Sheikh Hussein Al Abmar was expected to be named speaker of Majlis Al Shura, an upper consultative house proposed by President Saleh that would with parliament form the National Assembly.

CONDOLENCES

Victor and Ibrahim Ozgul and the family express their sincere condolences to Mr. George and Mrs. Terttu Wegelius on the death of his father. **EDWARD WEGELIUS** May his soul rest in peace

From opposition to government — people, not ideas, have changed

By Ed Blanche
The Associated Press

AMMAN — Thirty-five years ago, Ibrahim Izzeddine was in prison, a member of an opposition nationalist movement that protested, among other things, Jordan's lack of democracy.

Today he is a government minister overseeing a democratisation programme that King Hussein, a boyhood friend, hopes will point the way for political change in the Arab World where pluralism is rare.

"In Jordan today, everyone accepts the monarchy. It's a regime they can support," Mr. Izzeddine said in an interview with the Associated Press. "Things were different in the 1950s."

"Political parties were banned. We were young and idealistic and we wanted political and social change, an end to foreign domination, we all hoped for Arab unity overnight. Of course, it didn't happen."

"Nowadays, the ideas themselves have not changed, but the people have. They've developed and matured."



Ibrahim Izzeddine

Sitting in a gilded armchair in the lounge of his three-storey home, an autographed gold-framed portrait of the King standing on a side table, Mr. Izzeddine said: "It's personally satisfying that the King is implementing reforms that I and others had been advocating for so long."

"The fundamental principles of democracy were always there, despite everything. The system was never totally closed. But now we

have evolution instead of revolution."

The Izzeddines, a family of rank, have long had close links with the royal Hashemites.

But in October 1958, Mr. Izzeddine's movement, fired by the pan-Arab nationalism of the late Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser, was accused of conspiring against the regime, and he and others, including King Hussein's cousin, Abdul Hamid Sharaf, were arrested and thrown in prison.

Two months later, Mr. Izzeddine was released because of insufficient evidence against him — and his family connections — and left for Lebanon. He returned in the mid-1960s and soon became King Hussein's press secretary and held a series of other government posts.

In most Arab countries, Mr. Izzeddine might have disappeared into a dungeon or been shot. But King Hussein has a habit of co-opting his opponents. Mr. Izzeddine is one of several political figures who have ended up as ministers in the regime whose policies they once strongly opposed.

Arab regimes to blame for food imports -League

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Arab League has blamed its member governments for the Arab World's heavy dependence on farm imports although they have enough money and arable land to achieve food self-sufficiency.

Only 42 million hectares of the 133 million fertile hectares in the Arab World were being exploited and the area could decline because of desertification, the 21-member league said in its 1992 economic report obtained here Saturday.

"Among the main obstacles preventing the achievement of food security in the Arab World is the failure to exploit arable land," it said in the report distributed annually by the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund.

"Mismanagement inside the public sector is to blame as it hinders rural development while agricultural investment has remained relatively low because of the existence of several investment laws and the abrupt change in them."

Although Arab farm exports steadily grew over the past few years to around \$5 billion in 1990, imports rose to \$24 billion and could reach \$100 billion by the year 2000.

This created a deficit of \$19 billion, down three per cent over 1989.

Arab officials have repeatedly called for boosting agricultural investment in the region and for providing more incentives to farmers, warning that heavy reliance on imports poses security threats.

"The irony is that the rich Arab nations, especially in the Gulf, are an arid desert while the fertile countries are either poor or suffering from wars and political problems," a Gulf agricultural official said.

The most fertile Arab countries are Sudan, Somalia, and Iraq, but their farming areas have suffered from the devastation of war.

"The cumulative Arab food gap has totalled \$149 billion since 1980," the report said. "It stood at nearly \$56 billion in cereal, \$17 billion in dairy products, tea, coffee and tobacco, \$14 billion in sugar and \$12 billion in oil and fat."

"Agricultural development in the Arab World is not possible without a revision of investment rules, removal of trade obstacles, and improvement of pricing policies, which are discouraging for farmers."

It said new policies were also needed to encourage the private sector and eliminate obstacles blocking its efforts to set up farming ventures.

Little money for Afghan mine-clearing
ISLAMABAD (AP) — The United Nations is running out of money to clear an estimated 10 million land mines from Afghanistan and make the countryside safe for returning refugees.

Ian Mansfield, an Australian army lieutenant colonel on loan to the United Nations, said Saturday that he is about \$7 million short of the \$12 million needed to clear mines from roads, canals and the outskirts of most cities.

Col. Mansfield's job became particularly urgent last year when nearly 1.5 million Afghan refugees returned to their war-devastated homeland, believing that peace would come after guerrillas ousted the government in Kabul after 14 years of fighting.

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MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Malaysia offers palm oil credit, medicine to Iraq

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Malaysia has offered Iraq a 15-million-ringggit (\$5.9 million) palm oil credit facility and medical supplies worth 250,000 ringggit (\$97,000), its Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Ahmad Kamil Jassaf said. "Iraq has been facing a serious shortage of edible oils and food since the Gulf war," Mr. Ahmad Kamil said after talks with his Iraqi counterpart Saad Abdul Majeed Al Faizal Saturday. Malaysia's offer has been sanctioned by the U.N. Security Council. Mr. Ahmad Kamil was quoted as saying by the national Bernama news agency. The U.N. imposed an economic embargo on Iraq after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The embargo does not cover supplies of food or medicine. Mr. Ahmad Kamil said Malaysia's central bank, Bank Negara, would work out details of repayment for the palm oil credit. He said the medicines would be sent later this month. Mr. Ahmad Kamil said this was the first time Malaysia had offered palm oil on credit to Iraq.

Turkish forces kill nine Kurdish rebels

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (AP) — Security forces killed nine Kurdish guerrillas in two clashes in southeastern Turkey Saturday, the regional governor's office said. Eight guerrillas were killed when they attempted to cross into Turkey from northern Iraq near the Turkish town of Silopi, and another was shot dead in a separate clash in Degerli village in Mardin province, according to the statement. There have been other minor clashes since a unilateral ceasefire was declared by Kurdish rebel leaders on March 20. Turkish officials welcomed the truce but ruled out talks with the rebels who have waged a guerrilla war for self-rule since 1984. More than 6,000 people have died in the fighting mainly in southeastern Turkey where about half of the country's 12 million Kurds live.

Iran vows to continue supporting Muslims

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei Saturday rejected suggestions that Iran was stirring up Muslim fundamentalist unrest, saying individual Muslims were simply rallying to the defence of Islam. Ayatollah Khamenei, quoted by Iran's news agency, added that the Islamic republic would continue supporting Muslim causes around the world. "Referring to the influence of the Islamic revolution in the remotest parts of the world, especially the Islamic countries, the leader said Iran did not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. He said it was rather the Muslim individuals who defended the ideals of the revolution," IRNA said. "People in Egypt, Algeria, Sudan, and other Muslims elsewhere cannot be separated from Islam. The banner of Islam is hoisted in Iran, and therefore it is dear to Muslims," it quoted him as saying. Ayatollah Khamenei said western charges linking Iran to terrorism and human rights abuses "were only pretexts" to fight Iran's Islamic revolution. "The leader said Iran's practical support for the idea of unification of religion and politics, and defending Muslims rights in the world, particularly the Palestinians, was the main reason for the enemies to oppose the Islamic government in Iran," IRNA said. Ayatollah Khamenei, addressing residents of the northern Caspian Sea port city of Nowshahr, said mankind needed "the heavenly call of Islam" at this time. "Iran, in spite of all the biased propaganda against it, will not give up the principles and values of the Islamic revolution," IRNA quoted him as adding.

Iraq hands over six Kuwaitis to Red Cross

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Iraqi authorities Sunday handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) six young Kuwaitis who went missing more than a month ago near the two countries' border. The ICRC said ICRC delegate Arnold Luethold told the Kuwaiti News Agency (KUNA) that the six Kuwaitis, all from the same family and aged between two and 21, were handed over in Baghdad. They were to return to Kuwait through the border post of Safwan, he said. The hand-over came one day after the Kuwaitis met foreign journalists at a Baghdad hotel. Saud Abdul Aziz, the 21-year-old, said they lost their way and drove into a region controlled by the Iraqi army. Foreign Minister Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah said last week that the six brothers and sisters had been found in the southern Iraqi port city of Basra, after they went missing near the border on April 8. Amid public alarm over their fate and a massive search, Prime Minister Saad Al Abdallah Al Sabah offered a reward of 50,000 dinars (\$170,000) for information to trace the young Kuwaitis.

Ethiopian prime minister visits Israel

TEL AVIV (AP) — Ethiopian Prime Minister At Tamarit Layne arrived in Israel Sunday for a four-day visit expected to focus on relations among Red Sea countries and Ethiopian immigration. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres met Mr. Layne on arrival. Mr. Peres said the visit "can fulfill an important role in the reorganisation of the Red Sea coast where Israel today has good relations with Eritrea and Egypt." Ties with Ethiopia were established in 1989, and last week Israel established ties with the breakaway Ethiopian state of Eritrea. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Mr. Layne are expected to sign economic and agricultural agreements. They also are expected to discuss the Falash Mura, the thousands of Ethiopian Jewish converts to Christianity who hope to be reunited with relatives among the 46,000 Ethiopian Jews who have immigrated to Israel.

2 policemen shot dead in southern Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Gunmen shot dead two policemen in southern Egypt Sunday morning. Police said that Muslim extremists were suspected. If the militants claim responsibility for the shooting, the two deaths will bring to seven the number of policemen killed since the beginning of April. In the same period, three extremists have died. By AP count, 146 people have been killed in the violent confrontation between police and the radicals since last year. The militants want to turn Egypt into an Iran-like theocracy and are targeting police, foreign tourists and Coptic Christians. Police in Cairo said that police officer Yehia Abdul Malek and an aide Ramadan Abdul Karim were shot dead by two unknown gunmen in front of the house of one of them. The attack happened as they left the home of one of them in Al Qusya, near Assiut which is a hotbed of Muslim extremism. Local journalists in Assiut said Abdul Malek participated in the detention and alleged torture of dozens of suspected extremists during recent police crackdowns.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Joseph Balsamo
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine Sportif
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Special Programme
21:10 Documentary
22:00 News in English
22:30 Street Justice

PRAYER TIMES

04:10 Fajr
05:30 Sunrise
12:32 Dhuhr
16:12 Asr
19:26 Maghrob
20:54 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedisch, Tel. 810740
Assistance of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrace Church Tel. 622266

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 628286, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assiut International Church Tel. 625226
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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Dr. Mohammad Al Abbadi 778959
Dr. Rafeq Zeitoun 888665
Dr. Mukhlis Halasa 819220
Dr. Jamil Maraga 776149
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Al Nakouk pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsi pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

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Other Flights (Terminal 2)

20:00 Dubai, Damascus (EM)
18:25 Cairo (MS)
18:15 Beirut (RJ)
13:30 Khartoum (SU)
13:45 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
15:50 Istanbul (TK)
18:15 Aden (AL)
22:45 Vienna, Larnaca (OS)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:00 Jeddah (RJ)
11:45 London (RJ)
12:00 Beirut (RJ)
13:15 London (RJ)
13:25 Frankfurt (RJ)
21:00 Cairo (RJ)
21:30 Disakhn (RJ)
21:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
22:50 Abu Dhabi, Muscat (RJ)
06:45 Luxor (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:15 Aden (AL)
09:15 Beirut (ME)
11:25 Cairo (MS)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700/700
Banana 680/680
Banana (Mukammer) 630/620
Beans 540/430
Cabbage 70/40
Carrot 150/90
Cauliflower 230/190
Cucumbers (large) 120/80
Cucumbers (small) 240/180
Eggplant 380/350
Garlic 300/180
Grapefruit 260/200
Lemon 240/180
Marrow (large) 90/50
Marrow (small) 150/100
Mint 80
Onion (dry) 230/180
Onion (green) 280/180
Orange 200/150
Pepper (hot) 450/350
Pepper (sweet) 200/150
Potato 210/160
Tomato 220/200
Spinach 220/200

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

AMMAN

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16/27

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Dr. Mohammad Al Abbadi 7789



Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday is greeted by Girl Guides and a young girls choir at a ceremony where she received the temporary building of the Jubilee School (photo by George Crystal)

Queen receives Jubilee School temporary building in Abdoun

By Samir Barhum
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday officially received the temporary building for the Jubilee School project in Abdoun from Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Thouqan Al Hindawi.

During Sunday's ceremony, held as part of the Kingdom's ongoing celebrations of the 40th anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's assumption of his constitutional powers, Queen Noor was briefed on the final preparations for initiating the school's study programme, as well as the development of the school curricula.

The Queen also toured the school's library, classrooms, workshops and laboratories, and planted two olive trees, one on behalf of King Hussein and another on her own behalf.

The Jubilee School project which was undertaken by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education will provide opportunities for outstanding students from Jordan, and later other Arab countries.

Mr. Hindawi said in an address that the idea of this school is expected in the future to be generalised in all parts of the Kingdom.

The deputy premier attributed all the ministry's achievements to King Hussein, saying these achievements were accomplished because of the King's keenness to develop Jordan.

He thanked Queen Noor for adopting and supporting the idea of establishing such a school in the Kingdom.

The establishment of this pioneer school for gifted and talented students was announced in 1985 by Queen Noor, Chairperson of the NHF Board of Trustees, as the country marked the golden jubilee anniversary of King Hussein's birthday.

NHF Director Inaam Al Mufri said in an address at the ceremony that since 1985 the foundation has been preparing to bring the project into reality.

Mrs. Mufri paid tribute to the Ministry of Education, the mayor of Amman, the Public Transport Corporation and all institutions that helped in providing facilities

for the school's temporary building in Abdoun.

School Director Fathi Jarwan said Jordan was one of few countries in the world to establish such a school, noting that the project is the first of its kind in the region.

He said the school has thus far received 860 applications. Next Thursday, he said, the school will start interviewing the applicants, and soon will announce the names of the 100 students who will be admitted to its ninth grade for the next scholastic year, which will begin in September.

As part of the opening preparations, he said, the project's library was supplied with books and specialised periodicals dealing with educating gifted students. Also, the Ministry of Education has nominated several teachers to enroll in courses and workshops to prepare them to work at the school.

Engineer Rula Jaradat of the ministry of education said the three-storey school building, established on a 5.5-dunum lot, includes yards, parking lots, playgrounds, classrooms, a multi-purpose hall, a library, laboratories and other facilities.

Mrs. Jaradat said the school was built at a total cost of JD 500,000 and the other facilities have cost JD 40,000.

According to Dr. Jarwan, each classroom will include developed educational facilities such as computers and multi-media units.

He said the school will contribute to the development of education in Jordan and the region as a whole. "The school programme is a major contribution to the school reform and educational development plans which were launched in the Kingdom five years ago," he said.

The school director said the students will be receiving a comprehensive educational programme which will include advanced academic subjects and community service activities. It will provide special educational opportunities to students with high abilities and leadership potential to prepare them to assume roles in the development process in Jordan, he said, adding that the main objectives of the school are to encourage the students' critical thinking, develop their decision-making and problem-solving abilities, and to enable them to

conduct research inside and outside the school, in addition to the open-ended tasks that dominate the school's programmes.

He said the students will also be assisted in enhancing their communication skills and in developing civic awareness through participation in voluntary community activities.

Through providing scholarships and boarding, the school will allow students from various parts of the Kingdom, particularly from rural and underdeveloped areas, to benefit from its special programmes, said Dr. Jarwan.

Students applying to the school should have a high accumulative average over a period of five scholastic semesters, enjoy distinguished characteristics, attain a high I. Q. test score and pass an essay examination. A computer will analyse all these qualifications and will select the top 100 students.

He said plans to open the school in the scholastic year 1990-91 did not materialise because of the lack of needed expertise and insufficient resources, which prompted NHF to start the project at the temporary site in Abdoun.

The permanent site will be located in Um Zwaitneh near the Royal Scientific Society and the University of Jordan, to allow interaction between the students and experts associated with these institutions.

The school's activities will be supplemented by a Support Centre for Excellence in Education. It will conduct research and produce manuals, modules and training programmes to help meet the needs of high-ability students within their regular classrooms and schools.

When it operates in its full capacity in 1997, the school will accommodate 400 students.

The project has received technical assistance and support from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the British Council and private contributions from Jordan and abroad.

Present at Sunday's ceremony were Minister of Information Mahmoud Al Sharif, Amman Mayor Mohammad Al Bashir and other senior officials.

Jordan lauds UNRWA decision to ease planned levy on services to refugees

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan has succeeded in persuading the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) to ease an earlier agency decision to levy fees for basic services to Palestinian refugees in Jordan, according to the director of the Foreign Ministry's Palestinian Affairs Department, Adel Irshaid.

Asked to comment on the decision, UNRWA Director in Jordan Dennis Brown told the Jordan Times that the agency "has decided to postpone collecting half a dollar from each patient calling for treatment at health centres run by UNRWA."

But, he said, "UNRWA will still collect fees from students at its vocational training centres at Naour and Wadi Seer."

Mr. Brown said a \$25 annual fee will be paid by the students who commute daily to these centres, while boarders will have to pay a \$10 monthly fee for their training starting the coming scholastic year.

Asked whether UNRWA academic school students will pay as well, Mr. Brown said there was no intention in the first place for these students to pay any fees.

In a statement upon his return from a donor nations meeting in Vienna which ended Friday, Mr. Irshaid said the Jordanian delegation also met with delegates from the donor countries (those who contribute to supporting UNRWA's activities) urged them to increase their donations.

He said the delegation reported to the meeting and to the various delegates separately, about the condition of the Palestinian refugees, and demanded that assistance to them be increased, warning that reductions

would bring a negative impact on the region's stability at a time when the Middle East peace talks were in progress.

Mr. Irshaid said most of the delegates have expressed understanding of the Jordanian points of view.

The Jordanian government has voiced satisfaction with the latest UNRWA decision.

Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber said Jordan reiterates its determination to maintain close cooperation with the agency to help it carry out its mission, until a permanent solution to its deficit problem has been found.

In an announcement here last month, UNRWA said it would start levying token charges for health services and part of educational services it offers to Palestinian refugees in Jordan, effective July 1, 1993.

Mr. Brown said the move was aimed at addressing the estimated \$28.5 million deficit in the agency's \$300 million 1993 budget.

Dr. Abu Jaber, who earlier voiced the government's opposition to the move, had met with the agency's commissioner general Ilter Turkmen in Cairo last month to discuss the measure and instructed the Jordanian delegation to the meeting in Vienna last week to raise the issue and voice the Kingdom's opposition to any reduction in services or the imposition of fees for medical or educational services.

Noting that UNRWA has endorsed plans to transfer its education and health offices, from Vienna to Amman in July, Mr. Irshaid said the agency was also considering Jordan's request for the transfer of the entire administration to UNRWA's field of

operations in the Middle East. Furthermore, Mr. Irshaid announced that UNRWA has decided to purchase foodstuffs and other requirements which it distributes to the refugees from local Jordanian markets, acting upon the recommendation of an agency team which visited the Kingdom last month.

He said the move, which would greatly reduce the agency's procurement bill and help address the budget deficit, would also ensure a \$70 million income for Jordan.

Apart from the donor countries, the Vienna meeting was attended by delegates representing Syria, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan.

The next meeting, according to Mr. Irshaid, will be held in Amman in 1994.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

JEA honours veteran employees

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) Sunday honoured 14 of its veteran employees as part of the country's observance of Labour Day. The 14 were presented with gifts in recognition of their continued efforts to provide service to the country, said JEA Director General Mohammad Alrafiah.

Algerian education official to arrive for talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Algerian Minister of Education Ahmad Jabbar will arrive in Amman today on a four-day visit to Jordan at an invitation from Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Thouqan Al Hindawi. Mr. Jabbar will hold talks with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Mr. Hindawi, Higher Education Minister Awad Khleifat and Culture Minister Mahmoud Al Samra on ways to enhance cooperation between Jordan and Algeria in educational fields. The Algerian minister will also meet with officials at the Ministry of Education for a briefing on Jordan's educational development plan.

Jordan, Morocco to hold trade talks in Rabat

AMMAN (Petra) — The joint Jordanian-Moroccan Economic Committee will open its meetings in Rabat on May 17, at the experts level. The two sides will discuss ways to facilitate trade between the two countries, according to Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary General Marwan Awad who is leading the delegation.

Arab businessmen to meet in Damascus

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan is taking part in the Fifth Conference of Arab Businessmen and Investors to open in Damascus on May 17. At least 500 businessmen and members of Arab countries chambers of industry and commerce are expected to attend the meetings. Jordan is sending a team representing the public and private sectors.

Jordan to attend maritime firm meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will participate in the general assembly meeting of the Arab Maritime Company to be held at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo Tuesday. Along with Jordan, delegates from Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Sudan, Libya and Kuwait will attend the meeting to discuss the company's operations last year. The company, which has a \$18 million capital, operates a maritime line along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, transporting goods and passengers to and from European countries.

Iranian aviation officials to arrive today

AMMAN (Petra) — An Iranian civil aviation delegation will arrive today in Amman on a week-long visit to hold talks with officials at the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on the prospect of opening an air route between the two countries.



PRIME MINISTER Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Sunday meets with visiting Pope John Paul II, Cardinal Achille Silvestrini (second from left). At the meeting the Cardinal said that Pope John Paul II was supportive of peace, security and progress in the Middle East. Cardinal Silvestrini, who is prefect of Oriental Congregations at the Vatican, met with the prime minister to discuss the general situation in the region and relations between Jordan and the Vatican. The Cardinal, who was accompanied to the meeting by Monsignor Raouf Najjar, chancellor of the Apostolic delegation in Jordan, arrived in Amman following a visit to Iraq where he met with President Saddam Hussein. Cardinal Silvestrini was later received by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, who reviewed Vatican-Jordanian relations. The cardinal expressed the Pope's best wishes to Jordan for further progress (Petra photo)

Meeting calls for housing provisions for Palestinians

AMMAN (Petra) — An international meeting organised by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in Nairobi, Kenya issued a statement reaffirming the need to provide the Palestinian people living in the Israeli-occupied Arab lands with appropriate housing, according to Yusef Hiyasat, Jordan's delegate to the meeting.

The conference urged the U.N. secretary general to adopt whatever appropriate measures are needed, as soon as possible, to implement a national housing strategy for the Palestinians, in line with U.N.-sponsored programme on shelter and housing, said Mr. Hiyasat upon returning from the meeting.

Mr. Hiyasat, who is the director general of the Housing and Urban Development Department, said that the conference requested the U.N. secretary general to consult with the director of Habitat and cooperate with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to implement a housing strategy.

The conference, held between April 24 and May 7, demanded that the Israeli authorities safeguard the Palestinians' housing rights by putting an end to the confiscation of Palestinian-owned land; stemming the absorption of new Jewish immigrants; refraining from obstructing the Palestinian people's attempts to build homes; and halting measures intended to prevent the Arab people from manufacturing building materials or importing them, said Mr. Hiyasat.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Adnan Al Sharif at Baladna Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of Yemeni heritage which includes photos and paintings depicting development in Yemen, books on the history of Yemen, traditional costumes and handicrafts at Yarmouk University.
- ★ Exhibition of photos of His Majesty King Hussein and aspects of development in Jordan under his leadership at Yarmouk University.
- ★ Close-up photograph exhibition entitled "Intimate Petra" by Paula Williams-Brown and original embossed, hand-painted prints by Rima Farah at the Gallery, Inter-Continental Hotel.
- ★ Art exhibition entitled "The Legend of Petra II" by artist Suha Shoman at the National Gallery for Fine Arts.
- ★ Art exhibition by Jordanian artist Ahmad Nawash at the French Cultural Centre.

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Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the exhibition of paintings by Salem Al-Dabbagh, Karim Rasan and Himat M. Ali, Scheduled to open Monday, May 10, 1993, has been postponed until further notice.



The National Music Conservatory / Noor Al Hussein Foundation

and The American Center

present

APPLE HILL CHAMBER PLAYERS

In concert

In the program pieces by Hoffmeister, Beethoven, Schumann and others.

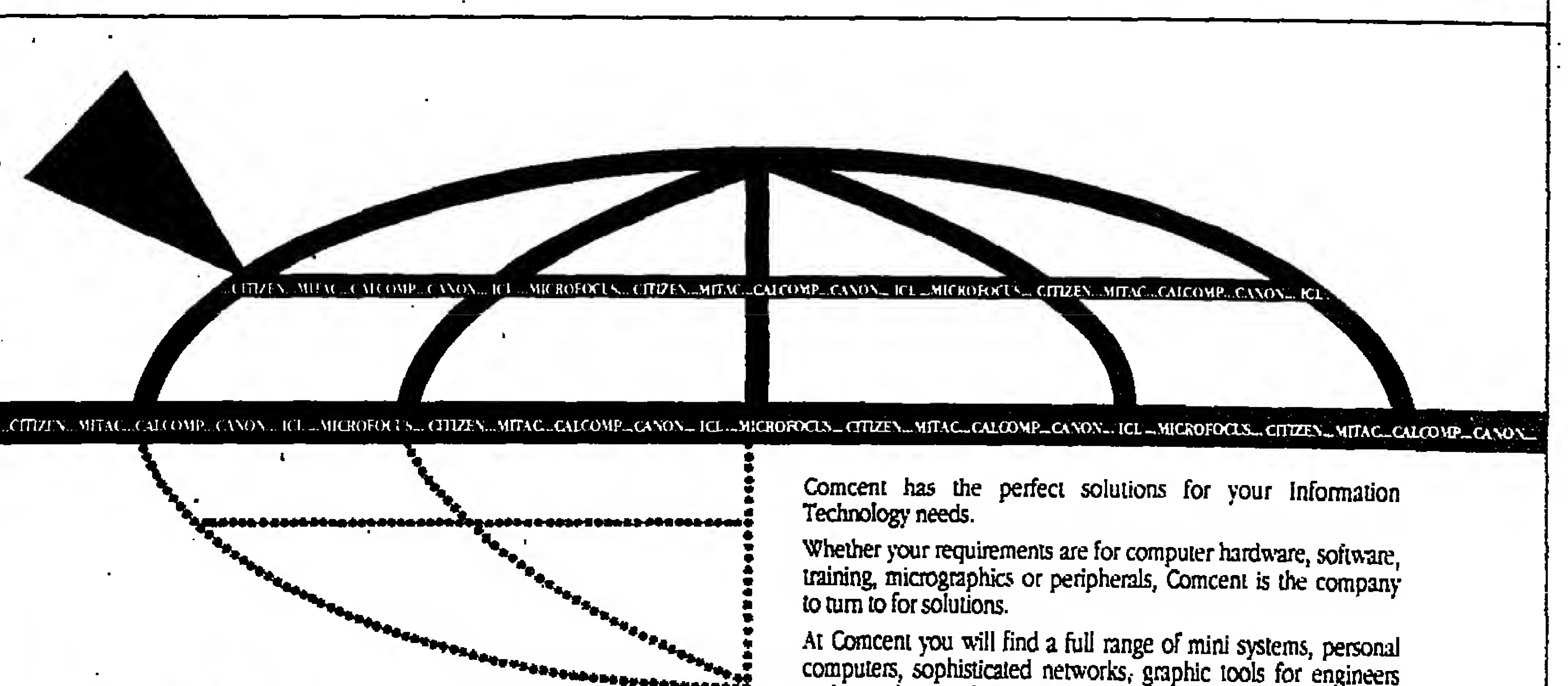
Tuesday, 11 May 1993 - 8:00 p.m.

Al Hassan Bin Talal Auditorium
University of Jordan

Tickets, for JD 5 and 3 each, are available at:

- Babiche, Tel. 661322
- Philadelphia Hotel, Tel. 863100
- Rihani Stores, Tel. 893775
- Romero Restaurant, Tel. 842227
- The American Center, Tel. 820101
- The National Music Conservatory, Tel. 887820

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GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

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Switching energies and endeavours

IRAQ'S ABRUPT closure of its border with Jordan last week to check currency smuggling after invalidating part of its pre-1990 banknotes exposed the extent of Jordan's meagre oil reserves. The country is totally dependent for its energy needs on Iraqi supplies estimated to be 50,000 barrels of crude oil and 25,000 barrels of fuel oil daily. The anachronistic arrangement between Jordan and Iraq for daily deliveries of oil is highlighted by the fact that the daily shipments constitute the daily requirements of the Kingdom. Once the daily land transport of oil and fuel is suddenly disrupted, as happened last week when Iraq sealed off its border with Jordan, the country's ability to satisfy its energy needs becomes precarious.

This time Jordan was able to cope with the problem because of the availability of sufficient reserves to ride out the temporary halt. The question is how the government intends to deal with longer interruptions in the supply of oil. The vulnerability of the country oil supplies poses also a problem as to whether the total dependence on one source is prudent, given the uncertainty of the situation in the Middle East generally. If the Kingdom has no access to other sources of oil and its derivatives, then why not have larger reserves for the purpose of dealing with prolonged interruptions in supplies.

We believe that given the uncertainties about the country's fuel sources, it would be only right to start thinking anew about increasing the national oil reserves by making available to the country new storage facilities including the sea tanker that was once bought but never used. Otherwise the Kingdom will continue to be at the mercy of contingencies in the region that stand to undermine its security and stability.

In these modern times, the first thing that any government tries to attain is an adequate strategic oil reserve. We wonder if our authorities have in fact achieved this goal. Fortunately the country has sufficient gas reserves to satisfy much of its needs. Hopefully more gas reserves will be found. Should this be the case, the country's industry should make more determined effort to shift to gas energy instead of totally relying on oil. Meanwhile, the country should keep on exploring for oil, and until oil is found, every effort should be made to avert emergencies in a credible way.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

FOLLOWING a wave of initial optimism over an imminent solution to the conflict in the Middle East, the Arab World is now discovering the truth: nothing is being achieved in the talks. The Israelis are using new tactics to delay any solution and all they gave the Arabs and the world was only promises that were never kept, said Al Dostour daily. What Israel has offered the Palestinians is only a little better than what had been offered them by the former Likud-led government, it said. Indeed, the negotiating tactics followed by the Israeli team have not changed a bit, on any tracks, the paper added. The third week of negotiations, which is due to start Monday, will be the last chance for the Israelis to prove their stand and it will be the final test of their real intentions, said the paper. Furthermore, the third week is bound to show the Arabs whether the American administration, which has promised to play the role of full partner, will honour its pledge, the paper continued. There is no doubt that the end of the third round in the ninth session will enable the Arab side to determine whether they should extend the talks indefinitely or not, but they ought to wait and see the outcome of the deliberations, the paper said. On the other hand, said the paper, the Arab masses will keep their eyes on Washington, will follow up every progress or setback and will see if the Israeli tactics can breach the United Arab front which was displayed at the start of the present session.

SAWT AL SHAAB was openly critical of the United States for its attitude towards the situation in the former Yugoslavia. In a statement, the White House likened the situation in Yugoslavia with that in Kuwait during the Gulf crisis; if that is so, said the paper, why was there no attack launched on the Serbs to end their aggression? The paper said that the U.S. administration was able to have the United Nations Security Council issue a series of resolutions that enabled the Western-led coalition to launch aggression on the Iraqi people. In its aggression on Iraq, the U.S.-led coalition devastated civilian institutions and killed thousands of innocent children and women, it continues to impose a siege on the Iraqis, causing more and more deaths, said the paper. While we still witness U.N. inspectors visiting Iraq and hear the American threats of renewed aggression on Iraq, we see nothing happening against the Serbs who continue their barbaric attacks on the civilian population in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the paper pointed out. The United States, its allies and the rest of the world community are looking on and not lifting a finger to help alleviate the sufferings of the Bosnian population although they possess the means to put an end to this conflict, the paper added. If the situation in the former Yugoslavia resembles that in Kuwait during the Gulf crisis, said the paper, then something ought to be done to deal with the situation.

Weekly Political Pulse

Economy could be the key to a viable Palestinian state

IT IS understandable, to a certain extent, that Palestinians are upset with the Israeli decision to seal off the West Bank and Gaza Strip from Israel proper. After a quarter of a century of Israeli direct rule over these territories, no wonder the economy of these areas and the economic well-being of its people became so heavily dependent on the Israeli economy.

But as the majority of Israelis rejoiced over the *de facto* separation of their state from the occupied Palestinian territories for security reasons, the Palestinians should also rejoice over the divorce from the Israeli side for political and economic reasons. And instead of demanding the lifting of the ban on Palestinian labourers working in Israel, the Palestinian leadership and the supportive international community should seek to create job and business opportunities for the Palestinian people on their own soil. The dependency of the Palestinians, be they workers or tradesmen, on Israel and its economy must be permanently broken instead of reactivated, like some Palestinians are officially asking as some kind of confidence-building measure from the Rabin government.

Rather than seeking the return to *status quo ante*, the

Palestinian side must seek Arab investment and support to uplift the Palestinian economy after twenty five years of stagnation. Otherwise, the Palestinian side would be in effect calling for closer economic and political relationships with Israel at a time when they are ostensibly asking for independence.

There are but two interconnected ways available for the Palestinian economy to become viable for even their most modest political aspirations. The first lies squarely on forging a closer economic union between the West Bank and the East Bank, as a prelude for a more stable and viable political relationship. Given the meager resources of the occupied Palestinian territories, the fragile Palestinian economy needs either Israel or Jordan to make it more robust and feasible. There is no doubt that the Palestinians would prefer a closer economic relationship with Jordan than with Israel. With all the talk about Arab and Palestinian nationalism, it would be utterly folly to presume otherwise.

The second route, readily available to the Palestinians even at this early stage in the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, is to call for an Arab conference where economic and financial aid would be

pledged to the bleeding Palestinian economy. At a time when Washington is already thinking about providing some \$1.4 billion in emergency aid, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip are on the threshold of offering the European Community (EC) on the economic package, one wonders why the Arab countries have yet to follow suit and make their contribution to peace in the area more effective and tangible.

This is one area where the rich Arab Gulf states can give tangible help to the ongoing peace process. This is the time to translate the avowed Arab support for peace in the Middle East by pulling the Palestinian economy out from its present disastrous condition and course. Left as is, the Palestinian economy is simply a prescription for extremism and fanaticism.

Surely the Arab capitals, which have a clear stake in the promotion of peace in the region, would like to invest in it as a matter of emergency. This way, the reemergence of the Green Line separating the West Bank and Gaza Strip from Israel could become not only permanent but also *de jure* in due course.

Core issues loom into focus

(Continued from page 1)

securing all its rights. But it also understands that steps for future cooperation can be only implemented within the framework of a comprehensive peace settlement.

"We have made it clear that the main issues have to be completely finished and agreed upon before we discuss implementation of all the agenda including bilateral cooperation and within a comprehensive peace settlement," another source said.

The Jordanians insist that there has to be "concrete movement on the ground on things that will indicate tangible progress to the people before we talk of implementation of side agreements."

And this is exactly where the Jordanian negotiators expect talks with their Israeli counterparts will come to a head. "It will become apparent that the Israelis have a different set of priorities for this track of talks."

What the Jordanians hope will provide opportunities to solve any deadlocks in the negotiations is willingness by the U.S. to come forth with a more defined "full partner" role and more particularly on the Palestinian track.

"If the Americans are seriously interested in creating movement on the ground, they will have an opportunity to show their seriousness when problems arise," one of the sources said.

So far, the Americans have upgraded the level of their day-to-day involvement in each track of Arab-Israeli negotiations by receiving detailed briefings on the substance of these talks. As talks move towards what is described as the "nitty-gritty" of negotiations, more active involvement is expected to bring the two sides closer to an agreement on details.

An indication of how balanced the role of the Americans will be is expected to come early this week on the Palestinian track, where a deadlock appeared to emerge over the Israeli implementation of a number of promises on a package of incentives

given to Palestinians to return to the peace table.

According to Palestinian negotiators, an American-guaranteed package of confidence building measures (CBM) which convinced the Palestinians to return here for talks was not fulfilled and is undergoing a process of Israeli delays.

According to sources, the Palestinians were promised that Israel could not continue its policy of expulsions, would speed up the return of the Marj Al Zhour expellees and would begin planning the return of earlier exiles. "We in turn promised to be more flexible on the Marj Al Zhour expellees, one of the sources said. The package, which was laced with a number of Arab promises for economic and financial aid, had a set deadline on its implementation which was the beginning of the ninth round.

Two weeks into the negotiations, however, the Israelis have not fulfilled their promises leading to the freezing of the meetings of the Israeli-Palestinian human rights committee meetings. The Palestinians say that the "ball is in the American court since the package was delivered to us by the Americans."

While it appears that there is progress on the Palestinian track it is too early to tell whether this progress is real or not.

Palestinians ended the past week of negotiations by stressing that Israel is playing a cat-and-mouse game with them by handing positive movement one day and then retreating on the next.

This has created a state of confusion for Palestinians, who have so far said that the Israeli moves balance out but do not make up for improvement, and Jordanians, who measure their progress by that on the Palestinian track.

Until actual progress is seen on the Palestinian track, whether on the human rights package or a statement of principles, Jordanian negotiators will use the time to reorganise their team in preparation for what they hope will be a mere engaging 10th round next month.

Full text of Israeli proposal

(Continued from page 1)

government arrangements period, a major change will occur in the existing situation in the territories by transferring to the Palestinians the vast majority of the functions of the civil administration, which will be dissolved. Israel will maintain responsibility for the overall security of the territories; Israel will also be responsible for the Israelis there. Options should be kept open for the next stage, per the above.

3. The Palestinian Executive Council
A Palestinian Executive Council (PEC), which will consist of an agreed functional number of Palestinian representatives from the territories, will be established through free, general and direct elections, by and from among the Palestinians of the territories, which will be held under agreed supervision and in accordance with agreed negotiated modalities. Detailed negotiations will follow concerning the modalities for the elections.

4. Powers and responsibilities
The Israeli civil administration will transfer to the PEC, executive and judicial powers (by independent judicial organs) per the agreement. The PEC will be vested with legislative powers within the responsibilities transferred to it, subject to agreed principles and to mutual consultation concerning any disagreement.

Due consideration will be

given to the need to review legislation in force in remaining areas, as appropriate.

5. Jurisdiction
The territories are viewed as a single territorial unit, the agreed proper fate of which will be determined in the permanent status of negotiations per the above. The authority of the PEC will apply within the territories, as appropriate, in accordance with its agreed operational-functional powers and responsibilities, to be further elaborated in the negotiations.

6. Security and police issues
A. Overall security will remain under Israel's responsibility. Security needs of both sides will be taken into consideration.

B. The PEC will establish a police force as a law enforcement organ, per the agreement.

7. Liaison
Israel and the PEC will establish a joint liaison committee to deal with matters of common concern and for the purpose of dispute resolution.

8. Agreed arrangements
Israel and the PEC will establish agreed arrangements for cooperation and coordination in areas of mutual concern, to benefit both sides and respond to their common needs.

9. Jordanian-related aspects
Jordanian-related aspects will also be discussed. The above principles will be further discussed and elaborated in the negotiations.

Palestinians working on own draft

(Continued from page 1)

Speaking to reporters after the meetings, Mr. Hussein said the negotiators and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) have drafted a new document which will be offered to the Israelis when the peace talks resume Monday after the weekend recess.

Mr. Hussein and three negotiators flew to Tunis from Washington Friday to discuss the Israeli proposals with the PLO leadership.

PLO Executive Committee members met with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat for three hours Friday with several of the Palestinian negotiators, including Mr. Hussein. They discussed the draft and the issue of autonomy.

Abdullah Hurnani, an Executive Committee member, welcomed only Israel's acceptance of international monitoring for elections to a self-governing authority in the territories.

"Only the form has changed while the substance of this (autonomy) position remains the same," Mr. Hurnani said, adding the draft ignores the Jerusalem issue and seeks to confirm the presence of Jewish settlements in the territories.

On Friday PLO spokesman

Yasser Abed Rabbo said the PLO rejected the Israeli draft as granting only "municipal powers" and some others in the areas of education and health.

Mr. Hussein would not go into details of the Israeli plan. But he stressed that the Palestinians remained committed to the Middle East peace process, launched under U.S. and Russian sponsorship in October 1991. And in the event of a deadlock over the self-rule proposals, the Palestinian will ask the United States to intervene, but will not walk out.

Mr. Hussein noted that the Palestinians still viewed the plight of nearly 400 Palestinians expelled by Israel to Lebanon in December as a major stumbling bloc.

Palestinian sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the PLO was particularly opposed to certain elements in the Israeli plan that leave the Palestinians effectively in charge of municipal affairs in the West Bank and Gaza, without control over the land.

That they viewed as an attempt to legitimise the Israeli occupation and rule out an independent Palestinian entity in the future.

Assad: Israel shows seriousness

(Continued from page 1)

any answers yet and until they do, any discussion of subsequent steps is meaningless," the Syrian leader said.

Israel has said it was prepared to withdraw from some territory on the Golan in exchange for peace.

Asked whether he meant Israel should pull out from the Golan Heights if Syria agreed to end the state of war, Mr. Assad replied: "No. We suggested total withdrawal for total peace but they did not agree to that."

Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's chief negotiator with Syria at the peace talks now underway in Washington, said Friday Syria must address three issues before Israel would say how far it was willing to withdraw: Syria must prove it has made an irrevocable decision to make peace with Israel, must further elaborate on the nature of peace and explain whether an agreement would be linked to settlements with other Arab parties negotiating with Israel, he said.

"It is clear to the Arab side that

the Israelis want to procrastinate and avoid dealing with the real issues," Mr. Assad said.

"He stressed the need for a comprehensive solution. "If Israel has ideas for a separate peace (with Syria) it would contradict the basic rules on which the peace process started in the first place."

Political sources in Lebanon said meanwhile that Beirut would ask Israel for a timetable for a withdrawal from South Lebanon in compliance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 425.

Such a timetable was not contained in an Israeli document submitted during the current peace round, the sources said.

In the document, however, Israel recognises for the first time the principle of a total withdrawal, according to a Lebanese official who requested anonymity.

The document also asks for the creation of Israeli-Lebanese military committees to plan the withdrawal and ensure security along Israel's border, he said.

The Lebanese want the Israelis to clarify the role of these committees, the political sources said.

Rabin crisis

(Continued from page 1)

cabinet reshuffle. Meretz is a fervent backer of the Washington talks. Last week Mr. Rabin warned a crisis could jeopardise the negotiations just as they had begun to show momentum.

"If the crisis will last more than 48 hours, it will for sure have a negative impact on the peace

talks," Health Minister Haim Ramon of Mr. Rabin's Labour Party told reporters Sunday.

"Therefore we must bring an end to this crisis as soon as possible."

Mr. Rabin's proposal for a cabinet reshuffle received mixed reviews from Meretz publicly.

Shas has long fumed against 64-year-old Ailon for her outburst against ultra-orthodox political parties that have benefited from their pivotal role in Israeli coalition-building.

PLO hits back at Brotherhood

(Continued from page 1)

"regretted that things have reached this stage."

Dr. Arabiyat, however, echoed sentiments expressed by the Brotherhood deputies in saying that the Palestinian issue concerns all Arabs and Muslims and no-one has the right to claim monopoly on it.

"We are one people and we are one nation. Nobody has the right to prevent others from talking about the Palestinian issue," he said. "But we hope that our brothers (the PLO and the Brotherhood) will soon meet on the interest of the nation," Dr. Arabiyat told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview.

Brotherhood Deputy Muhammad Al Haj said his bloc had chosen not to respond to what he called the "impolite" letter of the embassy in order not to escalate the tension.

Dr. Haj, however, rejected the embassy's statement that the Brotherhood should not interfere in Palestinian affairs as deputies in the Jordanian Parliament.

"Because the Palestine Nation-

al Council is dominated by one party (the Palestinian leadership) does not understand democracy and does not differentiate between government and parliament," Dr. Haj said.

"We are representatives of the Jordanian people who share the problems of Palestinians and thus have the right to say what we believe on the Palestinian issue," he said.

Dr. Haj tried to play down statements by Brotherhood deputies on Saturday that the PLO does not have the legitimacy to claim representation of the Palestinian people, saying the comments were made at "a moment of anger."

"It is acceptable to say that the PLO represents the Palestinians at international forums, he said, but it is unacceptable that it unilaterally takes decisions concerning the Palestinian people."

"It has become clear that the Palestinian people, even within the PLO itself, oppose the dominating line in the PLO. There are other PLO factions and there is Hamas that opposes its policies," he said.

'Beacon of hope' in Mideast

(Continued from page 1)

tees political freedoms.

New elections are scheduled this year, although they may be postponed until the reform process is completed.

It will take time for pluralism to take root. After decades of political inactivity, personalities rather than parties dominate Palestinians who make up 60 per cent of Jordan's 3.5 million population are also a wild card.

Former Prime Minister Tahir Al Masri acknowledged "the party system won't solidify until perhaps the election after next."

"But we're moving at the right pace — not too fast, not too slow. This is a small country, with a community based on tribalism and to change quickly is not healthy."

King Hussein told the Associated Press last week:

"Others still unfortunately look at us with suspicion and regard this as a luxury they cannot afford, but I believe it will have to come. Without this, the Arabs will remain a broken people."

Minister of State Ibrahim Izzedine, largely responsible for charting the democracy programme, does not believe Jordan's fundamentalists will pose a threat.

Compensation

(Continued from page 1)

Prince Hassan said: "Despite its meagre resources and limited means Jordan has been able to give refuge to the displaced people like it did in previous crises since the 1948 war."

But the next stage, he said, "requires a quick response and closer and more effective cooperation on the part of all concerned parties to handle this question."

"There is an urgent need to deal with the expatriates' issue and their compensation as well as the political, economic and social developments that accompanied the whole problem," the Crown Prince said. "This question should be handled in such a manner that would reflect positively on the country, safeguard the nation's higher interest and contribute to the improvement of relations with other Arab states."

Reviewing steps taken towards settling the compensation issue, the Crown Prince called for creating the appropriate "administrative and technical framework" and continued contacts with international organisations including the U.N. compensation committee.

Efforts should also be made towards familiarising the expatri-

"They play by the rules," said Mr. Izzedine, a former opponent of the regime. "They're more pragmatic than their counterparts in Algeria, Egypt and elsewhere." (see feature on page 2).

The Muslim Brotherhood, the main Islamic faction which won 22 of the 80 parliamentary seats in 1989, is quiescent. But security officials fear that if a Middle East peace settlement is achieved, Iranian-backed fundamentalists who oppose any agreement with Israel will drag Jordan into turmoil.

Ultimately, King Hussein's objective appears to be a constitutional monarchy. But under the 1953 constitution, he retains the power to dissolve parliament and appoint cabinets.

Jamal Shaer, deputy secretary-general of the Al Waed (Promise) Party which includes pan-Arab nationalists, says the monarchy must eventually surrender absolute power to parliament.

There has been a great and positive development to emerge so far and that is the free and honest elections held in 1989, said Dr. Shaer, who spent several years in prison for opposing the monarchy. "But we have to continue on this road until we realise full democracy."

ates with their rights and their duties and helping them to follow up the question of filling the forms and the process of seeking compensation, he said.

It was decided at Sunday's meeting that a centre for services and information should be set up at the JHCO offices to process compensation application forms and follow up on the matter with the U.N. compensation committee through the Ministry of Labour.

The centre, which will be supervised and run by a higher committee chaired by the labour minister, would include representatives of the ministries of foreign affairs, interior, planning and labour as well as heads of expatriates societies.

Prince Hassan stressed the need for speeding up work on the technical, organisational and administrative framework of the centre so as to assume its task as soon as possible.

Dr. Abdul Salam Al Abbadi, the JHCO secretary general, has been appointed as the higher committee's rapporteur.

Those attending the meeting were His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, the ministers of foreign affairs, planning, labour and interior and members of committees charged with following up the compensation issue.

Sales tax move said frozen

(Continued from page 1)

Jordan seeking an interim clearance for the debt renegotiation talks bypassing the sales tax provision, particularly that the levy has already been twice postponed.

Fahed Fanek, a prominent economist who has been a strong supporter of the IMF-prescribed adjustment programme, argued that the government, by shelving plans to introduce the sales tax now, "will not be meeting its obligation to the IMF since it had earlier committed itself in writing to do so."

But foreign economic diplomats and analysts who closely monitor Jordanian political and economic life disagreed. "Jordan has a good political case to present to the IMF," said a Western diplomat. "It has an excellent track record of implementing the restructuring programme and can cite internal opposition as a strong reason for not being able to introduce an unpopular tax, particularly that elections are coming up this year."

Another diplomat pointed out that opposition to the sales tax was not exclusively political as such the government's hand in dealing with the IMF was stronger. "The Chamber of Industry and the business community in general have made their opposi-

tion known in public," noted the diplomat.

A senior government official also supported this argument. "What would have been the reaction of the IMF if the government had submitted the sales tax law to Parliament only to have it torn apart with amendments?" the official asked.

In any event, the opposition to the sales tax was not limited to or exclusively by ministers who are also members of Parliament, the official said, refuting earlier reports that all deputies in the Cabinet rejected the levy saying that they would not like to be seen as party to enacting it a few months before they were to go to the polls for reelection.

"Some among the deputy-cum-ministers were supportive of the sales tax while some among the rest of the Council of Ministers opposed it," said the official. "There was no hard fast rule that one political segment of the government favoured or opposed the tax."

Other sources also attributed the delay in enacting the law to a combination of opposition based on political as well as economic considerations and what one source described as government anxiety to ensure that the sales tax "does not take a slice off the bread that reaches the poorer class of the society."

Iraq ridicules Bush plot charges

(Continued from page 1)

dor in Washington, on alleged Iraqi atrocities during the seven-month occupation of the emirate.

The woman, produced by a U.S. public relations firm and not identified as a member of Kuwait's ruling family, told Congress that after they invaded Kuwait in August 1990 Iraqi soldiers had taken Kuwaiti babies from hospital incubators and killed them.

The story was widely discounted by independent medical officials but was credited with helping to sway U.S. public opinion behind the war against Iraq.

An unidentified Kuwaiti source quoted by AFP said a colonel in the Iraqi intelligence service was the prime suspect in the alleged plot to assassinate Mr. Bush.

Raad Abdul Amir, who allegedly led a hit-team into Kuwait, "admitted having planned a suicide attack in which he was to set off explosives attached to his belt when he got close to

George Bush," the source told AFP in Kuwait City.

"The quantity of explosives seized from the members of the team exceeds 100 kilograms," he said, declining to be named.

"Abdul Amir was in charge of Iraqi intelligence service activities during the Iraq-Iran war."

The White House said Saturday the United States sent a team to Kuwait to investigate the reported plot.

White House spokesman George Stephanopoulos said the team returned to the United States Saturday morning. He said their trip was discussed briefly Saturday when President Bill Clinton met with top advisers about Bosnia.

"These are serious charges," Stephanopoulos said. "An investigative team has been sent to determine if there is credible evidence to back up the allegations, and that investigative team is working right now."

Contradictory picture emerges of bombing suspect

By Said Ghazali
The Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — Ahmad Ajaj, the latest suspect in the World Trade Centre bombing, emerges as a contradictory figure from the accounts of relatives and neighbors in occupied Jerusalem and West Bank.

His immediate family, perhaps being protective, maintains he was not active in Palestinian causes. But an uncle recalls Mr. Ajaj was imprisoned and says he may have been involved with Hamas.

By his own words, Mr. Ajaj was deeply affected by Israel's rule over the West Bank and Arab East Jerusalem, which began when he was not yet two. The violence of the occupation provided the backdrop to his youth.

Mr. Ajaj, 27, was charged Thursday with conspiracy to des-

troys the twin, 110-story towers in New York in the Feb. 26 explosion that killed six people and injured more than 1,000. Federal charges link Mr. Ajaj with at least one of the five men previously accused, all tied to Muslim fundamentalist causes.

At the time of the blast, Mr. Ajaj was in jail, accused of trying to enter the United States in September with a phony Swedish passport and a suitcase full of bomb-making manuals.

Mr. Ajaj is from the Al Faroukh clan in the West Bank village of Sair near Hebron, and he sometimes used that name. But his immediate family — known by the name Ajaj — moved to Jerusalem and he spent his youth there.

Mr. Ajaj has said he was expelled in May 1991 by Israel, but relatives say it was a "voluntary deportation" in which the ac-

cused agrees under pressure to a limited exile — in this case five years.

The Israeli army and police could provide no details on Mr. Ajaj's account of his exile.

His uncle, Mohammad Al Faroukh, said in Sair Friday that Mr. Ajaj was jailed on security charges for more than two years starting in 1987. He said he did not know Mr. Ajaj's exact offense — "perhaps distributing leaflets, perhaps he is a supporter of Hamas. But I am not sure."

Mr. Faroukh said Mr. Ajaj was arrested again and held for 35 days in Jerusalem just before he accepted exile in May 1991. He said he did not know the charges.

In March, Mr. Ajaj told an Associated Press reporter from a jail cell in New York that he was picked up in the West Bank when Israeli soldiers found explosives near his house.

Mr. Ajaj's immediate family, including six brothers and seven sisters, were clearly reluctant to say anything that might affect his case.

"My brother never messed with politics," said a brother, Abed, a plumber. "He was never jailed for nationalist crimes. He was arrested for civil crimes."

His mother, Fatieh, said she did not even know why Mr. Ajaj was expelled or what he had done since his exile. His father, Mohammad, a guard at Al Aqsa Mosque, would not talk to reporters.

Mr. Ajaj graduated from a religious high school and later studied to be a Muslim preacher.

After his exile, he said he fought with guerrillas who overthrew the communist regime in Afghanistan.

In a statement issued Thursday by his lawyer in Houston in support of his petition for U.S. political asylum, Mr. Ajaj traced a history of arrests and beatings by Israeli police and soldiers, tying what he said was his own oppression to that of the Palestinian people. Some of his facts seemed wrong, but it was not clear if it was due to confusion or deception.

He said his family's home in Sair was demolished by Israel to make way for a Jewish settlement. His uncle said in Sair Friday that some of the clan's land was confiscated for a settlement but no house destroyed.

Mr. Ajaj also remembered

being in Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque when "occupation authorities came in and killed three people inside the mosque" in 1982.

But in fact, it was an American immigrant who entered the mosque on April 11, 1982, killed a guard and wounded several people. There was no way to know if Mr. Ajaj was really there.

Neighbours echoed his family's contention that Mr. Ajaj was not involved in political causes. Some said he worked for an office that helped secure various Israeli permits for Palestinians — a job that would put him in contact with Israeli security authorities.

But his uncle said Mr. Ajaj's job actually involved helping Palestinian students get visas to the United States.

S. Arabia angry over rights group

(Continued from page 1)

The statement, also released by Liberty, said one of its objectives was to seek the release of political prisoners detained in Saudi Arabia.

On Sunday, Liberty said the group was set up "after the failure of all attempts to convince the Saudi authorities to release a number of detainees who have been held without trial and without clear reasons."

Formation of the group was accelerated following the arrest of Sheikh Ibrahim Al Dibyan, a senior religious figure from the western region of Al Qassim,

who was allegedly detained after criticizing a visit former U.S. President George Bush made to Kuwait in April.

Liberty also cited the case of two men, Fahd Al Zayid and Majid Al Rashid, who have been detained for two months "simply because their wives organised private Koranic study circles."

Islamic critics of the government have been making their voices heard since the Gulf war, when Saudi Arabia accepted the deployment of hundreds of thousands of Western troops on its territory.

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SPORTS NEWS
IN BRIEFSabatini reaches
Italian Open final

ROME (R) — Gabriela Sabatini reached her seventh consecutive women's Italian Open final Saturday when she inflicted a rare defeat on Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in the semifinals of the \$750,000 event with a 6-1, 6-3 win. Sabatini, 22, will meet Sanchez-Vicario's doubles partner Conchita Martinez in the final. Martinez beat American Mary Joe Fernandez 7-5, 6-4. Saturday's defeat was Sanchez-Vicario's worst this year and brought to an end an 18-match unbeaten run.

Agassi pulls out of
Rome

HAMBURG (AFP) — American Andre Agassi has pulled out of next week's Italian Open and will be replaced by Russian Andrei Chesnokov. Chesnokov, a finalist Sunday, gets his chance because of an injury to the Wimbledon champion. Agassi recently withdrew from the Atlanta and Hamburg tournaments, suffering from tendonitis in his right wrist.

Bologna win Italian
basketball title

BOLOGNA (AP) — Knorr Bologna won its 11th league title Saturday by defeating defending champion Benetton Treviso 117-83 to sweep the Italian Basketball finals three-games-to-none. Predrag Danilovic Knorr's Yugoslav forward-guard, was 11-of-14 from the field to lead all scorers with 28 points. Croatian Tony Kukoc, playing in what could be his last game in Italy, led Treviso with 21 points. Kukoc has been sought by the Chicago Bulls of the United States' National Basketball Association and he has said recently he would like to join the NBA next season if Benetton releases him. Benetton, which had invested millions of dollars to capture a second straight league title and the European Cup, ended the season empty-handed.

Oldham victory sends Palace down

LONDON (Agencies) — Oldham completed a remarkable run for survival Saturday, defeating Southampton 4-3 for its third consecutive upset victory to secure a place in England's Premier League for another season.

Oldham's victory, which followed must-wins over Aston Villa and Liverpool, coupled with Crystal Palace's 3-0 defeat at Arsenal to send Palace down on the last weekend of the regular season.

Oldham and Crystal Palace each finished with 49 points in 42 games, but Oldham stays up by virtue of a better goal differential. Middlesbrough and Nottingham Forest had already clinched relegation from the 22-team league.

West Ham is headed in the other direction, its 2-0 victory over Cambridge good enough to gain the second automatic promotion position in division one. Champions Newcastle had secured the first slot Tuesday night.

Oldham led 4-1 in the second half with goals from Neil Pointon, Ian Olney, Andy Ritchie and Gunner Hall. But Southampton's Matthew Le Tissier made the fans at Boundary Park nervous with as he finished off a hat trick to pull the visitors within one with five minutes to play.

Many of the 15,000 fans stormed the field on the final whistle, having done their own bit of scoreboard-watching as Palace was being shut out at Highbury Stadium.

Ian Wright, returning from three games out with a broken toe, notched his 26th goal of the season Arsenal. Paul Dickov and Kevin Campbell added late goals to seal Palace's fate.

Elsewhere, Nottingham Forest's Brian Clough received a standing ovation from the Ipswich home crowd as England's longest-serving active manager stood at the sidelines for his final game.

Clough, who is retiring next week, saw his son Nigel score Forest's only goal in a 2-1 loss. Simon Milton and Steve Whitton tallied for Ipswich.

Graeme Souness, rumoured to be on his way out at Liverpool, missed his team's 6-2 thrashing of Tottenham before 43,000 fans at



Ian Wright

Anfield. The Liverpool manager instead turned up to watch the game at Coventry, reportedly to check on a player.

On the field, Ian Rush scored his 300th and 301st league goals for Liverpool, and John Barnes added two goals in the rout.

At Coventry, last year's champion Leeds became the 19th team in top league history to complete its schedule without a win on the road. Rodney Wallace scored a hat trick for the visitors, including two goals in the last two minutes, to salvage a 3-3 draw.

In other games, Peter Beagrie scored two goals in Everton's 5-2 win at Manchester City. Efan Ekoku netted twice for Norwich in a 3-3 tie at Middlesbrough. Dane Whitehouse also had two for Sheffield United in a 4-2 victory at home to Chelsea, and Tim Sherwood's goal gave Blackburn a 1-0 win at home to Sheffield Wednesday.

League champion Manchester United travels to Wimbledon while Queens Park Rangers hosts Aston Villa.

David Speedie and Clive Allen gave West Ham the goals it needed against Cambridge United to edge Portsmouth for promotion in division one. Portsmouth, 2-1 winner over Grimsby, will enter a playoff with Swindon, Tranmere and Leicester to determine the third team to go up.

In Scotland, premier division champion Rangers won 1-0 over Dundee United, while Falkirk and Airdrie were relegated to division one.

Leading goalscorers after Saturday's English soccer games (league goals in parentheses):
Premier League:
Teddy Sheringham, Tottenham, 28
Ian Wright, Arsenal, 28
Micky Quinn, Coventry, 22
Les Ferdinand, Queens Park Rangers, 22
Alan Shearer, Blackburn, 22
Ian Rush, Liverpool, 21
Mike Newell, Blackburn, 21
Brian Deane, Sheffield United, 20
Mark Bright, Sheffield Wednesday, 20
David White, Manchester City, 19.

Marseille take another step towards record

In Paris, Marseille took another step towards a record fifth consecutive French league title Saturday when they scored their 20th win of the season by beating Caen 3-2 away.

The European Cup finalists fought back superbly after trailing twice in a repeat of the midweek French Cup clash between the two sides which Marseille also won 2-1.

Caen started like an express train and went ahead after just seven minutes when Franck Sauze conceded an own-goal. But Ghana's skilful frontrunner Abedi Pele levelled the scores after a half-hour with a neatly headed goal.

Stephane Paille put the home side 2-1 clean two minutes into the second-half, but Marseille's top league scorer Alen Boskic of Croatia was on target on the hour with his 19th goal of the season. Pele then clinched victory with a goal seven minutes from time.

Marseille's immediate rivals Paris St. Germain stayed three points adrift by scoring a 1-0 home win in their top-of-the-table clash against Monaco. Their goalscorer was Laurent Fournier.

Lewis outpoints Tucker
to retain WBC title

LAS VEGAS (AFP) — Britain's unbeaten Lennox Lewis kept his World Boxing Council (WBC) heavyweight crown Saturday when he unanimously outpointed American challenger Tony Tucker over twelve rounds.

It was Lewis' first defence of the title awarded to him in December when the WBC stripped World Boxing Association (WBA) and International Boxing Federation (IBF) champion Riddick Bowe of their crown.

The 27-year-old Lewis, who put Tucker down for counts in the second and ninth rounds, dominated throughout — although he was caught by a series of big punches in the eighth before storming back just before the bell.

The judges scored it 118-111, 117-111 and 116-112.

The British fighter has now won all 22 of his pro fights and has stopped 19 of his opponents.

It was the 33-year-old Tucker's second defeat after 48 wins. Although the victory kept Lewis on course for an eventual showdown with Bowe, who lost to Lewis in the 1988 Olympic super heavyweight final, it was a less than convincing performance and at times the action was so slow it drew boos from the crowd of 15,000 at the Thomas and Mack Centre.

In the final two minutes of the round Tucker went on the attack, but his rally was too late.

"I lost to a good fighter," Tucker said. "He was the better man tonight. I will be back."

Lewis said: "He's got a great chin and guts. I just fought a smart fight. I could always do better."

Lewis earned \$7.8 million, while Tucker took home \$1.05 million. McClellan turns the tables to take title: Gerald McClellan of the United States became the new WBC middleweight champion when he turned the tables on knock-out specialist Julian Jackson of the United States Virgin Isles to score a fifth-round stoppage.

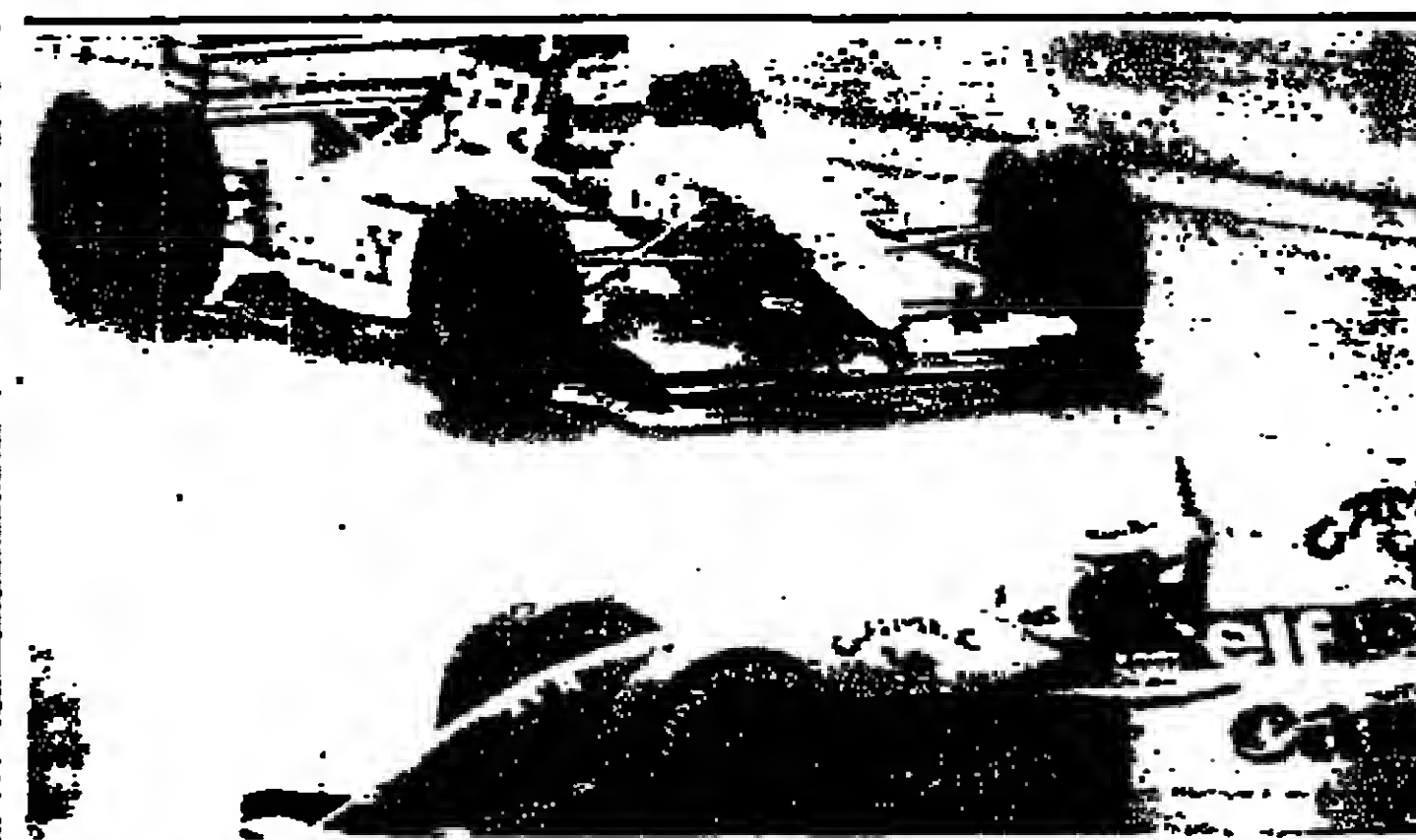
Jackson, who went into the ring with 43 knock-outs to his credit, became the 26th fighter knocked out by the 25-year-old challenger from Detroit.

McClellan, who had been given extra time to recover from a low blow in the fifth, caught the champion with a tremendous right and two left hooks to the head seconds after the contest resumed.

Although the champion got back on his feet, he had clearly not recovered. He immediately went down for a second time to a right to the jaw and although he bravely got back on his feet, referee Mills Lane wisely decided to call a halt after the mandatory eighth count. Chavez makes it win 87: Unbeaten Julio Cesar Chavez of Mexico retained his WBC light-welterweight crown Saturday night when he stopped Guyana's brave but outclassed challenger Terrence Ali in the sixth round of a scheduled 12-round contest.

The referee wisely called a halt as Ali took heavy punishment after surviving a knock-down.

It was the 30-year-old Chavez' 87th win. Ali has now lost eight and drawn two of 62 contests.



Brazil's Rubens Barrichello slows his Jordan-Hart to avoid Frenchman Alain Prost's Williams, Renault after Prost spun off the track during a practice session for Sunday's F-1 Grand Prix in Barcelona. (AFP photo)

Prost wins Spanish GP

BARCELONA (AP) — Alain Prost of France captured his 47th Formula One victory of his career as he easily captured the Spanish Grand Prix Sunday.

Prost went into the lead over Williams-Renault teammate Damon Hill after 10 laps and held it for the rest of the 65-lap race for his third victory of the season.

Hill dropped out after 41 laps to give Ayrton Senna the runner-up spot with a McLaren-Ford. Senna ended up almost 17 seconds behind Prost.

Michael Schumacher of Germany and Riccardo Patrese of Italy took third and fourth with Benetton-Fords.

It was the Prost's 47th career victory and moved him into the lead of the driver's standings over Senna. Prost now has 34 points with Senna at 32.

American Michael Andretti finished fifth in a McLaren-Ford. It was Andretti's first complete race of the season after four races.

Prost did 65 laps of the 4.747-kilometre in 1 hour, 32 minutes, 27.685 over 308.555 kilometres. He averaged 200.227 kilometres an hour.

Gerhard Berger of Austria moved into sixth in the final laps of the race to gain a point for Ferrari.

In the driver's standings Schumacher moved into third for the year with 14 points ahead of hill who stayed at 12.

Supersonics, Rockets
advance to 2nd round

SEATTLE (R) — The Seattle Supersonics and Houston Rockets advanced to a second-round matchup in the NBA Western Conference playoffs with victories Saturday.

In Seattle, Sam Perkins notched 11 of his 20 points in the third quarter when the Supersonics outscored the Utah Jazz 39-18 en route to a 100-92 victory in the fifth game of their best-of-five Western Conference playoff series.

The Rockets also used a big third quarter to build a lead but had to hold off a furious charge by the Los Angeles Clippers to win 84-80 as Vernon Maxwell, playing with a broken bone in his left wrist, hit a three-pointer to regain the advantage with less than a minute to go.

The Sonics-Rockets Western Conference semifinals begin Monday night at Seattle.

Perkins, who was acquired by Seattle from the Los Angeles Lakers before the trading deadline this season, hit four three-

pointers and also had a game-high 13 rebounds.

Utah's Karl Malone led all scorers with 26 points. John Stockton had 19 points, including 17 in the second half, for the Jazz.

Utah eliminated Seattle, four games to one, in the Western Conference semifinals last season.

In Houston, Maxwell's three-pointer with 56.6 seconds remaining gave Houston an 82-80 lead and Kenny Smith added a layup down the stretch to put away the decisive game of their best-of-five playoff series.

In the other Western Conference semifinal, the San Antonio Spurs will face the winner of Sunday's fifth game between the Phoenix Suns. The NBA's best team during the regular season, and the surprising Los Angeles Lakers.

In the east, the New York Knicks host the Charlotte Hornets in the second round while the New Jersey Nets visit the Cleveland Cavaliers.

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ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

Neither vulnerable. North deals.
NORTH
♠ A Q 5
♥ A 8 3
♦ K J 10 7 6 4
♣ 3

WEST EAST
♠ 6 ♠ K 9 3
♥ J 10 9 5 2 ♥ Q
♦ 9 8 5 3 ♦ 2
♣ 8 6 4 ♣ A K Q J 10 5 2

SOUTH
♠ J 10 8 7 4 2
♥ 7 6 4
♦ A Q
♣ 9 7

The bidding:
North East South West
1 ♣ 3 ♣ 4 ♣ 3 ♣
Pass Pass 4 ♣ Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♣
There's a nary a one of us who, at one point or another, has not been guilty of taking our eye off the ball, to use a sporting analogy. We're indebted to Alan Hiron for this example.

East's jump to three diamonds is a modern convention which puts an idle bid to good use—it asks partner to bid three no trump with a stopper in the enemy suit. South passed to

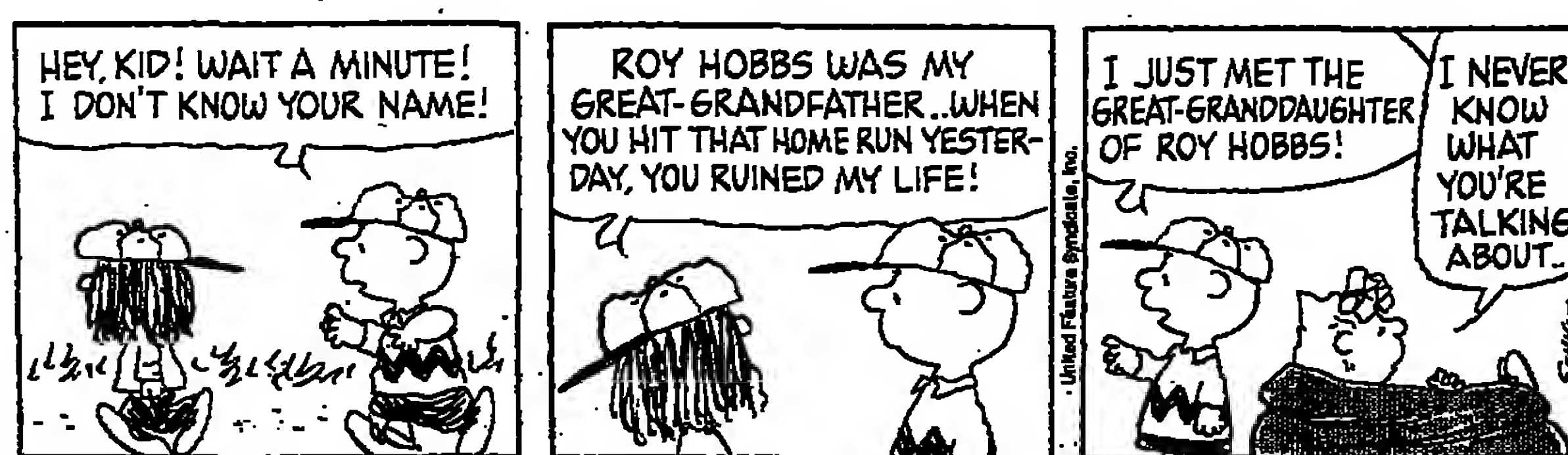
see what would happen, then entered the fray with four spades when it seemed the opponents had found their spot.

West's jack of hearts was taken by dummy's ace. Since East was marked with the king of spades by the desire to play three no trump, declarer continued with the queen of trumps from North—an effort to retain control of the trump suit. East countered by allowing the lady to win.

Declarer cashed the ace of spades, but could not play a third trump—East would win and take two club tricks and at least one heart to defeat the contract. Instead, declarer abandoned trumps in favor of starting on diamonds. East ruffed the second round of the suit, in an effort to reach partner's hand, shifted to the five of clubs.

South followed routinely with the seven of clubs—a decision that will long be etched in the memory. A somewhat surprised West won the trick with the eight and cashed a heart to fulfill a one-trick set on a contract which, thanks to the quirks of distribution, was a shoe-in.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY MAY 10, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Flighter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES:

Being so concerned with the practical could result in your neglecting important personal duties and relationships that need your immediate attention. Don't bring up old scores with current mate.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Find out in conversations with usual allies just what they are willing to do to help your joint interests and tonight have a marvelous time at home.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Take some time out this morning to decide how you can enrich your present life with a greater abundance, tonight attend to interesting outside matter.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Go after what you want of a personal nature in a very confident manner for later you are able to get into ways to newly increase your assets.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) This is your moment to see ways to greatly increase your intimate talents and activities in the morning while later brings desires to the influential.

LEO: (July 22 August 21) Be on the lookout for a good friend who can give you the boost to gain an important aim, then you can get into the actual tasks that are required by you.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You see ways to use your finest mental qualities to extend your

worldly image and activities while tonight influential friends show you a wonderful time.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You are inspired to gain real results where an up to date interest is concerned so centre your attention on this and get support of one in power.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Talk out any practical problems you have with a business person of much experience, then you can be off to enjoy that recent new acquaintance.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Show a partner you understand the breadth of the vision that person has in a joint project, then you can do your part of the bargain extremely well.

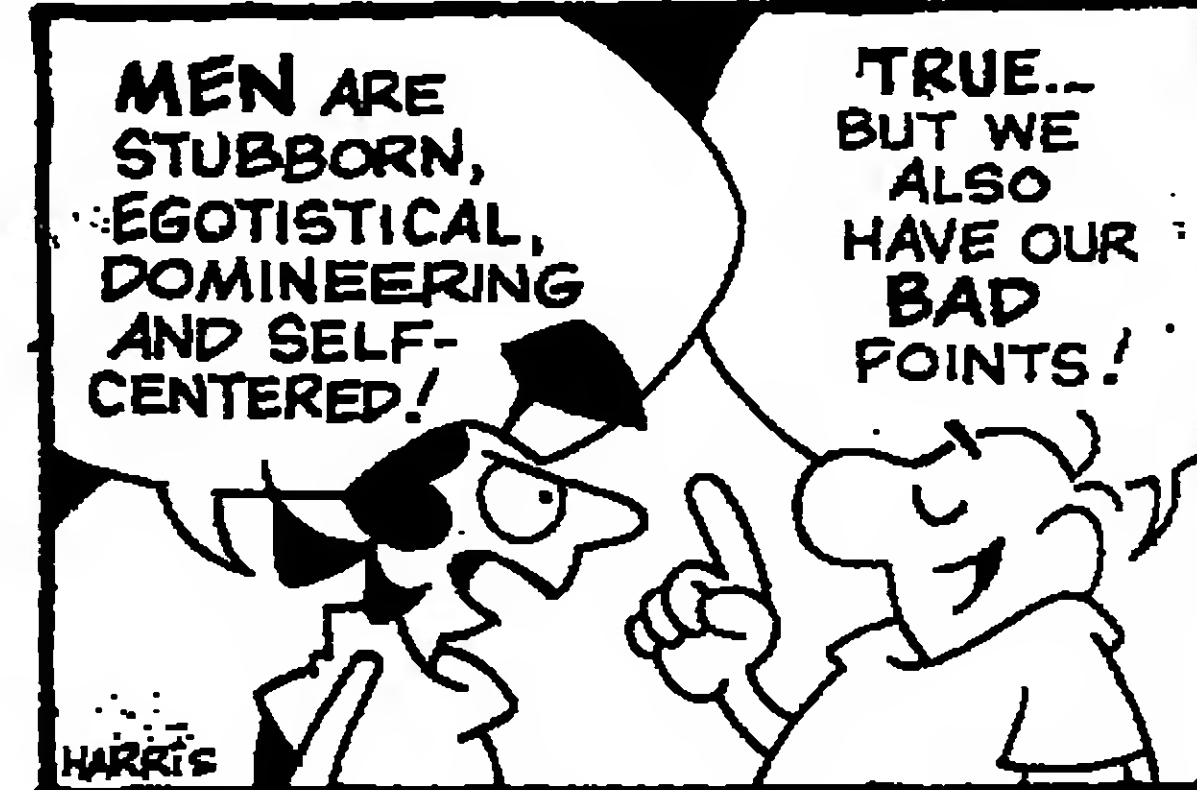
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You can start this week with making big progress in successfully putting forth your standpoints, then you can find new outlets under which to operate.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You find a big outlet by which to benefit from your special gift so bring your talent to the attention of bigwigs, then get into work they want you to do.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Take some time out to enlarge happiness at your residence, then you can take family out to recreations, entertainments that you have a good time at.

THE BETTER HALF.

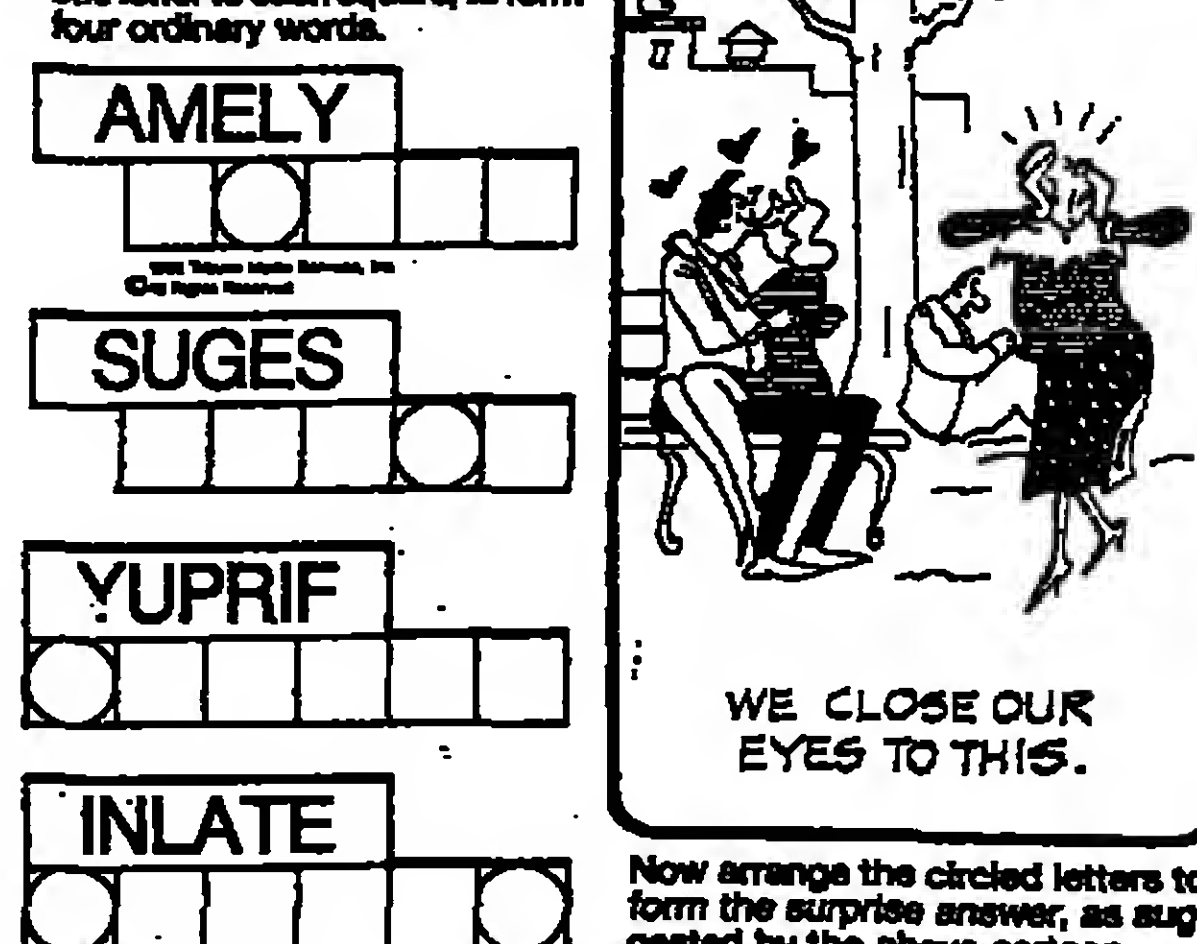
By Harris



JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

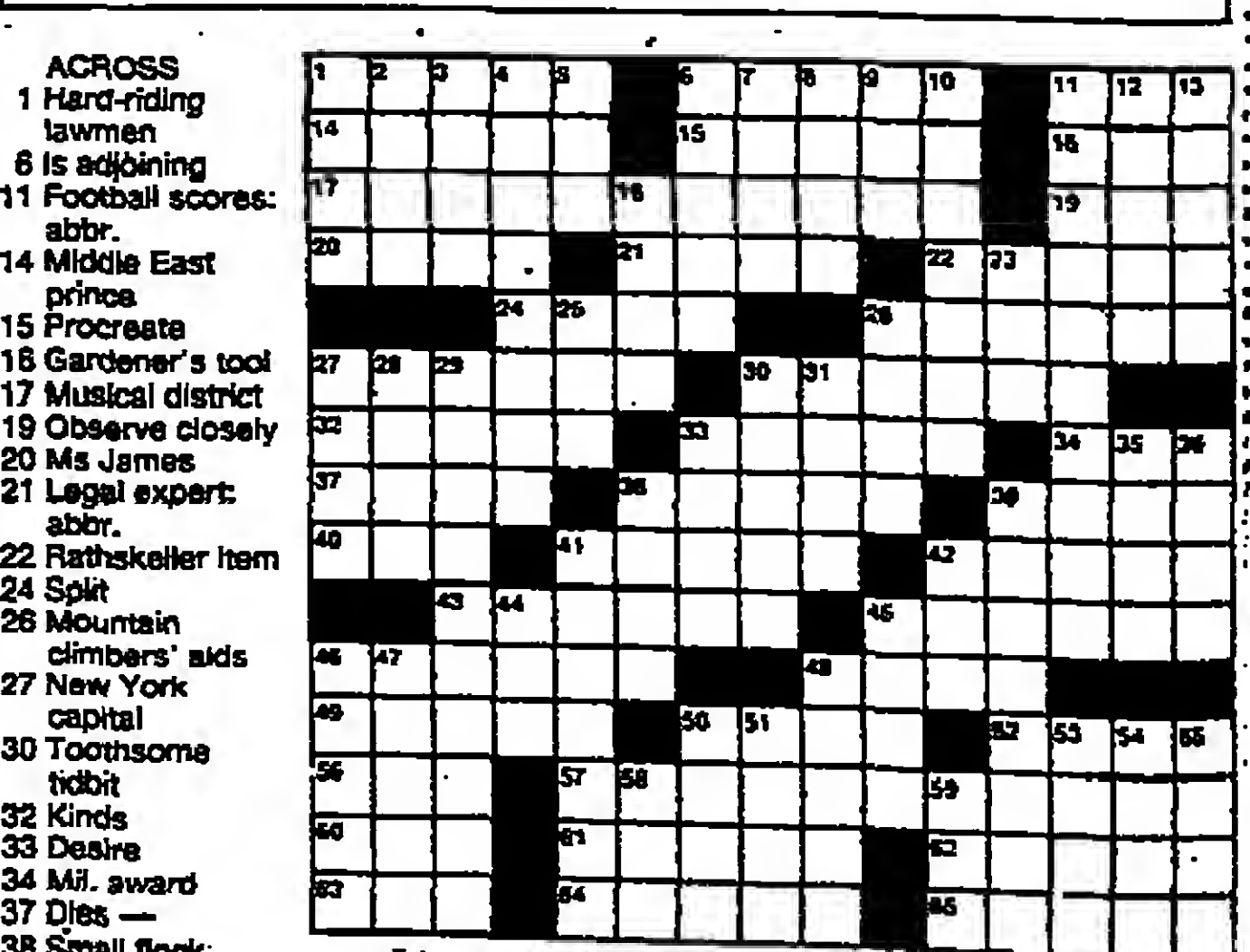


Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: LIBEL BLAZE UNEASY ADMIRE

Answer: What she was after posing for a full-length portrait—ALL IN

THE Daily Crossword by Frank R. Jackson



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

SOAP DASH SPAN
ALMA BERNE HARR
MEETMEINSTOON
POS RANSO AIRIES
STAPLE REARREY
ARNE GILLARD
GOODYEYCOLLOMARS
ANN BOON ARIE
BARRET ROTATE
BERNARD WIRP
ALLAITE CAFE RISS
SEVERNYNATIONISIA
EVEN GRASE ARRIA
LENA DARY SHIT

2751
null

Premadasa slaying fits into world pattern

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka's slain president has joined a list of world leaders assassinated in public and security experts say there had been glaring lapses although little could be done to stop a suicide killer.

Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa was blown to pieces in what police claim was a suicide bombing at a May Day rally where the 68-year-old leader was mingling with thousands of his supporters. The assassin seemed to have got within five feet of the president. That shows he was known to the bodyguards," retired Sri Lankan Air Force Chief Harry Gunatillake said faulting police for not screening those with access to Mr. Premadasa's home.

Tamil groups and police sources have identified the assassin as Kulasekaram Veerakumar, alias Babu, who had befriended the president's valet M. P. Mohideen.

Babu had spread the word that he was intimately close to Mr. Mohideen and through him to the president. He was working at a grocery store just outside Mr. Premadasa's private residence here and had access to it.

"It looks like the police did not screen this man probably out of fear because of his connections," Gen. Gunatillake said.

He said Mr. Premadasa's murder fitted into a pattern of famous assassinations such as U.S. President John F. Kennedy, civil rights leader Martin Luther King, former Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

"They were all killed in public. In this case there is very little one could do in the face of a suicide attack. But events leading up to it could have been avoided," Gen. Gunatillake said.

Premadasa was the second Sri Lankan leader to be assassinated while in office after Prime Minister Solomon Bandaranaike was shot dead in 1959 by a Buddhist monk at his home while receiving constituents.

Police claimed they advised Mr. Premadasa not to walk in the May Day procession because of their inability to search the hundreds of thousands of people who were expected at the ruling United National Party (UNP) rally.

"Judging by the number of casualties among the bodyguards, it looks like there weren't many covering him," a senior defence official noted. Mr. Premadasa was about to get into his bullet-proof Ranger Rover when he was killed.

Mr. Premadasa's successor Dingiri Banda Wijetunga told reporters shortly after assuming office that he felt more security personnel should be deployed to protect VIPs.

Mr. Wijetunga, however, declined to blame the dominant Tamil separatist group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), for the killing although police had earlier said the rebel group was the prime suspect.

"How can you say it is the LTTE. The investigations are not over yet," Mr. Wijetunga said. The LTTE has been charged with the May 21, 1991 assassination of Rajiv Gandhi by using a woman suicide bomber at an election rally in South India.

After the Gandhi murder, Mr. Premadasa's bodyguard began filming audiences at every meeting he attended to study crowd reactions and see if there were any "suspicious characters" trailing the president.

The widow of the slain President may make a claim to Sri Lanka's leadership in a move that could see history repeating itself, political commentators said here Sunday.

Hema Premadasa, 57, broke tradition to deliver an emotional vote of thanks at the state funeral.

Political commentators of privately owned Sunday newspapers said the widow's public pledge to continue in the footsteps of her late husband was an indication that she may want to take over his leadership of the ruling party.

Sri Lanka produced the world's first woman premier following the assassination of Prime Minister Solomon Bandaranaike which propelled his politically inexperienced widow Sirima to take over the country.

However, unlike Sirima who was merely a housewife at the time the leadership of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party was thrust upon her, Hema has developed a political high profile according to her official biography.

Yeltsin pledges new steps as opponents rally

MOSCOW (R) — Up to 15,000 Russian nationalists and Communists, led by army officers, marched through central Moscow into Red Square Sunday denouncing President Boris Yeltsin as a butcher and capitalist slaveholder.

Police reinforcements stood ready in sidestreets, fearing Russia's annual celebration of victory over Nazi Germany could bring a repetition of May Day clashes in which over 500 were hurt and one policeman was killed.

Mr. Yeltsin, who described last week's clashes as the "death throes" of communism, laid a wreath at the Kremlin Wall to the Soviet Union's 20 million World War II dead.

Turning to Russia's current power struggle, he vowed swift action to drive home his referendum victory last month over hardliners.

"I have a full package of documents with measures ready to be published after the (Victory Day) holidays," Mr. Yeltsin told journalists at the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior.

The president, who also attended a ceremony at a new war memorial outside Moscow, said in the Kremlin Saturday he considered himself the only legitimate authority in Russia.

But parliamentarian Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov, speaking to journalists after laying a wreath Sunday, described Mr. Yeltsin's draft for a new constitution as "a toy" that should be ignored.

To the strains of wartime marches, Mr. Yeltsin took a traditional salute from army, navy and airforce servicemen. Groups of war veterans, their breasts agleam with medals in warm spring sunshine, followed him to pay homage at the eternal flame in Alexander Gardens.

Police monitored the protest march from Byelorussia Station, scene of emotional homecomings

in 1945. The crowd paraded along Moscow's central Tver Street in a sea of red Communist and black-yellow-white nationalist flags, led by a rank of militant anti-Yeltsin officers, some serving, some retired, carrying red tulips.

The protesters, including the leaders of Communist factions and the militant National Salvation Front, then spilled onto Red Square, site of Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin's mausoleum.

Red banners declared "save Russia from capitalist slavery and Yeltsin's mafia" and "Yeltsin, the butcher of Russia".

A huge yellow streamer, playing ironically on Western cold war parlance, proclaimed, simply, "The Russians are coming".

Nationalist member of parliament Sergei Baburin, speaking from atop an armoured vehicle draped with red banners and pictures of Stalin, told the crowd Russia was in the same position as in 1912, when Napoleon's armies captured Moscow.

"The French have again taken the Kremlin but once again they will be driven back down the road to Smolensk," he declared, describing Mr. Yeltsin's administration as an occupation regime.

In a television interview Saturday night, Lieutenant-Colonel Stanislav Terekhov, head of the militant Union of Officers and organiser of the march, warned of "hundreds of corpses" if security forces tried to limit their movements.

But a last minute agreement between Moscow City Council and militant protest organisers, allowing protesters to march to the Red Square area, reduced tensions and fears of new fighting.

Col. Terekhov blamed special Omon police forces for last week's clashes, accusing the president of deceiving the people and preparing the way for a dicta-

torship. The president said Sunday he planned firm measures to consolidate his power following an April 25 referendum that gave him a 59 per cent popular confidence vote.

His chief aim is to introduce a new constitutional order to supplant the old basic law anchored in the Soviet past. He has called on Russian regional leaders to endorse by June a new draft constitution, abolishing the current conservative parliament and granting him strong powers.

In their shorter term, he also hinted at government changes to press ahead more quickly with economic reform.

"The entire presidential team should now consist of reform supporters," he told a Kremlin news conference.

The hardline Communist leader of the May 1 demonstration, Viktor Ampilov, was reported missing Sunday, the day of another anti-government demonstration in Moscow.

He was interrogated the night before over the May Day protest which left one policeman fatally wounded and hundreds injured.

His wife told the Interfax News Agency that he was "worried" that Mr. Ampilov had neither phoned nor returned home since he and several other die-hard Communists were interrogated Saturday evening.

13 killed in 2 plane crashes
Aircraft crashes Sunday in two Russian cities during holiday stunt flights killed 13 people, news agencies reported.

At least 10 people were killed when a single-engine plane crashed into a crowd in the Siberian city of Nizhny Tagil during a Victory Day aerobatic exhibition, the ITAR-TASS News Agency reported.

The YAK-52 was flying with two other planes when it broke in two, caught fire and crashed



Russian President Boris Yeltsin (centre) takes part in a wreath laying ceremony to mark the 48th anniversary of the victory in World War II at the tomb of the unknown soldier near the Kremlin in Moscow (AFP photo)

New Bosnia truce comes into force

SARAJEVO (R) — A new ceasefire came into force in Bosnia Sunday in another attempt to halt Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War II.

The latest truce took effect at noon (1000 GMT) across the republic under an agreement between the commanders of Muslim-led government forces and the Bosnian Serb army.

The deal did not involve Bosnia's Croats, reported to be battling their former Muslim allies in central Bosnia, and it was not immediately clear how widely it was being observed.

Nevertheless it appeared likely to offer European nations — reluctant to engage in military action on the continent for the first time since 1945 — a breathing space from U.S. pressure for selective air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs.

A separate accord declares the Muslim enclaves of Zepa and Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia to be "demilitarised zones" and calls for the withdrawal of weapons and combatants. U.N. peacekeepers will be deployed to police the zones.

The French commander of U.N. forces in Bosnia, who mediated for 30 hours between Bosnian Serb General Ratko Mladic and Muslim commander Sefer Halilovic, said the ceasefire should be given time to work.

"Now, we have to judge people not just on what they sign but by what they do," General Philippe Morillon told France-Info radio from Sarajevo.

"We will have to wait for two, three or four days to see if this declared intent...is put into effect," he said.

Small arms fire crackled in Sarajevo shortly after the ceasefire clock began ticking, on a day when World War II veterans in former Yugoslavia and elsewhere marked the 48th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany.

A string of ceasefires in the 13-month-old Bosnian war, most recently on March 28, has failed to halt the carnage in the former Yugoslav republic.

But British defence secretary said the West wanted to see whether the latest truce worked before moving to the option of air strikes to press the Bosnian Serbs into acceptance of a U.N.-backed peace plan they defiantly rejected Thursday.

He was speaking after Britain's Sunday Times newspaper reported that Western warplanes were ready to pound strategic Bosnian Serb targets within 10 days. Senior British officials dismissed the report as pure speculation.

"We haven't ruled that (air strikes) out. There can be circumstances in which the use of air power can be effective," the British secretary told the British Broadcasting Corporation in London.

The peace plan, drawn up by mediators Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance, would carve Bosnia into 10 provinces along ethnic lines and has already been endorsed by Muslims and Croats.

But the erstwhile allies against the Serbs were fighting each other for supremacy in central Bosnia Sunday, with the fiercest exchanges reported in the town of Mostar.

The Muslim-led Bosnian army accused Croatia proper of in-

volvement in the fighting. Croatian Radio said Muslim forces had attacked a Bosnian Croat Army (HVO) barracks at dawn.

The reports could not be independently confirmed but U.N. Protection Force spokesman Barry Frewer said tension was building in Mostar with artillery fire into the city reported on Saturday evening.

Commander Frewer said a company of about 100 Ukrainian U.N. soldiers and a French medical team would set out for Zepa Sunday afternoon to begin implementing the mountain settlement's demilitarisation under Saturday's accord.

The enclave, where at least 30,000 civilians are trapped by a Serb siege, has been reported under fierce assault by Serb forces since Tuesday. It was among five enclaves, including Sarajevo, which the U.N. declared "safe areas" last week.

Sarajevo Radio, in a report before the noon ceasefire deadline, said the assault continued early Sunday.

There has been no independent confirmation of the situation in Zepa because U.N. observers have so far been unable to reach it. An observer team was again trying to reach Zepa Sunday.

Gen. Mladic Sunday doubted that the United States had "the will" to intervene militarily in the Bosnian-Herzegovina conflict, the Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency reported.

"Fajting cited Gen. Mladic as saying U.S. threats to intervene were "rather the expression of those putting pressure on Washington than a real desire to get involved militarily."

Fujimori backs military officials accused of abuses

LIMA (R) — President Alberto Fujimori reaffirmed his confidence in the head of Peru's armed forces and a key intelligence official accused of murder by a renegade army officer.

"I reaffirm my confidence in General (Nicolas) Hermoza," Mr. Fujimori said in an interview on Radio Programme Del Peru.

Gen. Hermoza and Vladimir Montesinos, a high-level National Intelligence Service official who is close to the president, were the target of explosive charges made this week by General Rodolfo Robles.

Gen. Robles, who was removed as chief of army instruction a week ago, fled with his family Friday to exile in Argentina on a plane provided by the Argentine government after taking refuge in the U.S. embassy in Lima.

Accompanied by his wife and two children, Gen. Robles arrived in Buenos Aires early Saturday

It was unclear whether the Peruvian general had been granted political asylum. Gen. Robles had been due to take up a post as military attaché at the Organisation of American States (OAS) but entered the U.S. embassy in Lima Wednesday and refused to leave.

After taking refuge in the embassy with his family, Gen. Robles had charged in a document handed to the press that Gen. Hermoza was aware and had approved of operations by a "small group of hired assassins" within the army.

Among other crimes, the group was responsible for the summary executions of nine students and a professor at a Lima university last July, Gen. Robles said.

But Mr. Fujimori said he had no intention of dismissing Gen. Montesinos, a controversial figure who is reported to have strong influence over the president, until he had received proof of the charges against him.

NAM seeks to relaunch North-South dialogue

JAKARTA (AFP) — Representatives of 37 member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) meeting in Bali from Monday will try to lay the foundations for a resumption of North-South dialogue, diplomats here say.

The meeting of the NAM's Standing Ministerial Committee on Economic Cooperation will be only the second since the committee was set up on India's initiative in 1986.

The first meeting was held in Harare in 1988. The Indonesian hosts and organisers acknowledge that fewer than half of the participating countries will be represented at the four-day session by their foreign or finance ministers, with top bureaucrats sitting in for the others.

Judging it necessary to resume with the rich countries of the "North" their discussions on a new world economic order, NAM members decided at their 10th summit in Jakarta last September

to re-activate the dormant structure. With the end of the cold war, the NAM wants to continue as the spokesman for the developing countries of the "South," and a more streamlined meeting in Bali could be more effective in defining that role.

"A number of countries wanted to attend, but the list was revised a few weeks ago. For reasons of efficiency, it includes only 37 of the 108 countries of the movement," one North African diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP.

Two countries will hold official functions during the committee meetings: Host Indonesia, which currently holds the NAM chairmanship, and Colombia, which is presiding over the "Group of 77."

The G-77 represents Third World countries which are not necessarily members of the NAM but wish to concentrate on economic issues.

Scandal could bring down Venezuelan president

CARACAS (AFP) — With the Supreme Court due to decide if President Carlos Andres Perez can be tried in a potentially explosive corruption case, Venezuelans are talking about what happens if the president steps down.

The embattled 70-year-old president, who last year survived two failed military coups, may have reached the last of his political nine lives.

While insisting he so far has had no intention of resigning over the scandal, he also has hinted it is possible that he might not serve out the rest of his term, which ends in February 1994.

The alleged corruption stems back to February 1989, when 250 million bolivars in a secret Interior Ministry account were exchanged for \$17.2 million at a preferential exchange rate, even as the government was preparing a sharp devaluation of the Venezuelan currency.

Weeks later, following the devaluation, the funds were channelled back into the Interior Ministry — in bolivars. An 11-million-dollar profit was made with the manoeuvre.

On Wednesday, a draft congressional report said that there is evidence that Mr. Perez and 18 others are responsible for criminal wrongdoing in the case.

Nelson Chitty LaRoche, president of the Chamber of Deputies' Comptroller's Commission investigating the case, said there was sufficient cause to file criminal charges and strip immunity from prosecution where applicable, particularly the president's.

Mr. Chitty said that among the others allegedly at fault in the case are former Interior Minister Alejandro Izaguirre and presidential Chief of Staff Reinaldo Figueredo.

The Supreme Court now is to consider the report and alleged corruption case.

Fighting in 3 Cambodian provinces cap bloodiest week in 14 months

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Fighting in three provinces of Cambodia over the weekend capped the bloodiest week in this South East Asian country since United Nations peacekeepers deployed here 14 months ago.

Throughout the country, Khmer Rouge guerrillas attacked U.N. positions, government-held towns, roads, railway lines and airports. Fighting left at least 42 people dead — including U.N. policemen from Japan and the Philippines. Another 18 U.N. peacekeepers were injured, along with scores of Cambodians.

Fighting in eastern Kompong Cham, northern Preah Vihear and northwestern Banteay Meanchey provinces over the weekend capped the week, with two Khmer Rouge reported killed when Pakistani troops fired back at an attack. One Pakistani peacekeeper was injured.

On Friday, Phnom Penh government troops in Kompong Cham captured three Khmer Rouge-held villages, U.N. officials said, while shelling from the attacks could be heard in the capital 70 kilometres away.

On Saturday morning, Khmer Rouge guerrillas attacked the Cham Khasan district capital in northern Preah Vihear near the Thai border, lobbing artillery shells into town near the U.N. camp manned by Pakistani troops. The Pakistanis returned fire, killing two Khmer Rouge, the U.N. spokesman said.

One Pakistani was injured, he said. Also Saturday in northwest Cambodia's resistance-held zones, forces loyal to Prince Norodom Sihanouk attacked the Khmer Rouge, their former allies, who have been steadily encroaching on their territory in recent months, a U.N. official said.

In the biggest attack of the week, the Khmer Rouge rampaged through the town of Siem Reap Monday and captured the airport where thousands of tourists land every year to see Angkor Wat.

The guerrillas also attacked the base camp of their former Chinese allies in central Kompong Thom, and blew up the train from the capital to north-west Cambodia, killing at least 13 passengers as they sacked the train.

Despite the violence, the United Nations insists the elections scheduled for May 23-28 will go on, albeit in more limited areas. It has long abandoned its attempt to create what it once called the "sine qua non" of a neutral political environment for the elections. Now, the chief U.N. peacekeeper has called only for "minimum" conditions suitable for holding the elections.

The United Nations insists it is not being directly targeted, but the casualty toll is mounting, prompting the Japanese government to send an envoy to Phnom Penh to ask for Japanese police men to be moved to more secure locations.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who remains in Peking and refuses to return to his country, claim over the Babri Mosque site, saying no government will be able to rebuild the fallen shrine after dismantling the makeshift temple.

tried to hold an emergency meeting but the Khmer Rouge did not show up. The other factions vowed to go ahead with elections anyway.

The Khmer Rouge have vowed to try to halt the U.N. elections with violence, calling them a rubber-stamp of the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia.

Hanoi insists all its invading troops withdrew from the country in 1989, but the Khmer Rouge dispute this.

"Our country will die if factions or individuals continue to argue and kill each other, resulting in the death of an ever-increasing number of our compatriots," the prince said in a statement. "Again I beg armed groups to bring an end to the violence and killing once and for all."

Meanwhile, during a campaign swing through Phnom Penh, Prince Norodom Ranariddh said Sunday Vietnam and Thailand must return Cambodian territory they have grabbed over the centuries.

Prince Ranariddh, son of Prince Norodom Sihanouk and head of the royalist party, denounced the Phnom Penh government installed by the Vietnamese army after their late 1978 invasion and accused it of giving Hanoi Cambodian territory.

"If the regime wins (the upcoming elections) it would be impossible for them to recover" the lost land, Prince Ranariddh told some 5,000 sympathisers gathered under a scorching sun at an esplanade near the royal palace.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who remains in Peking and refuses to return to his country, claim over the Babri Mosque site, saying no government will be able to rebuild the fallen shrine after dismantling the makeshift temple.

"One will be very naive to believe that a government which failed to save the Babri Mosque will reconstruct it," said Wahiduddin Khan, an Islamic scholar who advocated negotiations with the Hindus to solve the dispute.

Muslims, he said in an interview, should forget the Babri Mosque once and for ever as long as Hindu groups promise not to lay claim over any more Islamic shrine in the country.

COLUMN

Miss Norway wins National Costume Competition

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Miss Norway, wearing a traditional red and black confirmation suit, won the Miss Universe National Costume Competition. The red jacket, white blouse and ankle-length skirt with red embroidery that the Beate Strand wore are typical of clothing worn by Norwegian girls the day they are confirmed by the church. The National Costume Competition is among several major events leading up to the final Miss Universe 1993 contest to be held on May 21 at the National Auditorium. In second place in the costume competition was Miss Lebanon, Samana Chadravi. She wore a light green jacket and pants and matching conical hat similar to those worn by Lebanese princesses in the 17th and 18th centuries. Miss Turkey, Ipek Gumusoglu, wearing a traditional Turkish wedding dress, was third. There were 79 contestants. Eighty-five young women from around the world will compete for the Miss Universe title during the final competition, to be broadcast to more than 600 million television viewers in 175 countries worldwide.

Pollution forces removal of Cellini's famous statue
FLORENCE, Italy (AP) — Be-

venuto Cellini's famous bronze statue Perseus will be removed from the Piazza Della Signoria to repair damage from air pollution and acid rain, city officials said. Annamaria Petrioli, director of the Uffizi Gallery in this city of art, said the Cultural Affairs Ministry will announce when the statue will be removed. "However, decay is so fast that the choice is between destruction of the original statue or its replacement with a copy," Ms. Petrioli told Italian media.

Unemployed executive 'turned to robbing banks' — police
RENNES, France (AFP) — An unemployment executive whose family believed he still had a job allegedly held up seven banks in five months in a spate of armed robberies which netted him thousands of dollars, police said.

Daniel Richard, 48, was arrested here Friday suspected of having snatched 176,000 francs (\$33,200) in the raids, police added. A divorced economics graduate, father-of-two Richard was living "a normal life" in a suburb here with his girlfriend and her two children, police said. His neighbours described him as a "friendly man." His alleged robbery spree began after he told his girlfriend last December that he had been taken on by a company as sales manager. He then held up six banks before police, realising that in each raid the robber wore a scarf and carried a small handgun, picked up his trail. Richard was arrested while lunching in a cafeteria with his girlfriend.

Hong Kong selects its official drink: The Hong Konger
HONG KONG (AP) — Singapore has its Singapore Sling and now Hong Kong has its own official drink: The Hong Konger. At a contest organised by the Restaurant and Caterer's Association Saturday to select an official drink, judges voted for a concoction that blends dashes of Scottish drumbie, bitters and southern comfort, three ounces of vodka, all stirred with ice cubes. It was the brainchild of bartenders at a hotel who said the vodka — clear and strong — represents Hong Kong. Scottish drumbie is its British heritage, bitters the energy and potential of the colony's people and southern comfort the territory's hope for Chinese on its northern border. The judges described the drink as "crisp, clear, vibrant, sophisticated and cosmopolitan."

Why borrow when you can steal?
ST. PAUL, Minnesota (R) — A man described by his family as an avid reader has been arrested for stealing 30,000 library books most of which were found stuffed in his home, car and two rented lockers. Police said Gerald Lapre, 40, would be charged with theft and possession of stolen property. They said he smuggled the books out of public libraries in paper bags or checked them out with false library cards over a 10-year period. The books, which ranged in subject matter from Greek and Roman mythology to Garfield the cat, were valued at 600,000.

Hindus, Muslim hardliners head for showdown over India mosque

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Hindu and Muslim hardliners are flexing their muscles over the ancient Babri Mosque, putting a government plan to rebuild the razed Islamic shrine in jeopardy.

Muslims want the mosque reconstructed at the same place in Ayodhya where Hindu extremists turned it into a rubble in a fit of frenzy on Dec. 6 and quickly raised a makeshift Hindu temple on its ruins.

Hindu militants and politicians say they will never let the razed mosque built by Moghul King Babar in 1528, come up again at the spot, which they claim is the birthplace of their Lord Rama.

The temple-mosque row has sparked scores of communal riots since 1986, the worst in the aftermath of December which simmered on for two months, leaving an estimated 2,000 people dead.

The government of Premier P.V. Narasimha Rao, who after the sacrilege vowed to have the mosque rebuilt in Ayodhya, is in a fix, knowing that any unilateral decision could again trigger terrible Hindu-Muslim violence.

There are hardly any takers for the two separate trusts announced by Mr. Rao to construct a new Babri Mosque and a grant Rama temple at Ayodhya,

a tiny town in northern India. The temple trust has received lukewarm response, with a few Hindu holy men willing to take official support for a Rama shrine. But there are no takers for a government-sponsored mosque.

"We shall not accept any substitute mosque or alternate site for the mosque," said Syed Shahabuddin, a Muslim MP. "We want the mosque reconstructed on the original site as promised by the prime minister."

It is a demand backed by Islamic countries. Ahmad Bukhari, deputy Imam

of the historic Jama Masjid (mosque) here, said: "Indian Muslims will neither be deprived of their claim over the Babri Mosque nor will they accept any other place for the building of the mosque."

Hindu militants are equally intransigent. "We want to construct our (Rama) temple at that very site with the bricks sent by our own people," said Swami Vamdev, a Hindu holy leader who has been at the forefront of an emotive temple construction campaign.

"We will never let the government construct a temple," he added.

Hindu leaders who initially went on the defensive after the destruction of the mosque now openly brag about the feat, describing the Babri shrine as "a black spot of slavery" built by Moghuls at a Hindu holy site.

Hindu moderates are willing to take government help to construct a Rama temple at Ayodhya. However not only are they outnumbered by the extremists, but they are also opposed to raising the Babri Mosque where it earlier stood.

Muslim moderates on the other hand want their 100-million-strong community to give up its